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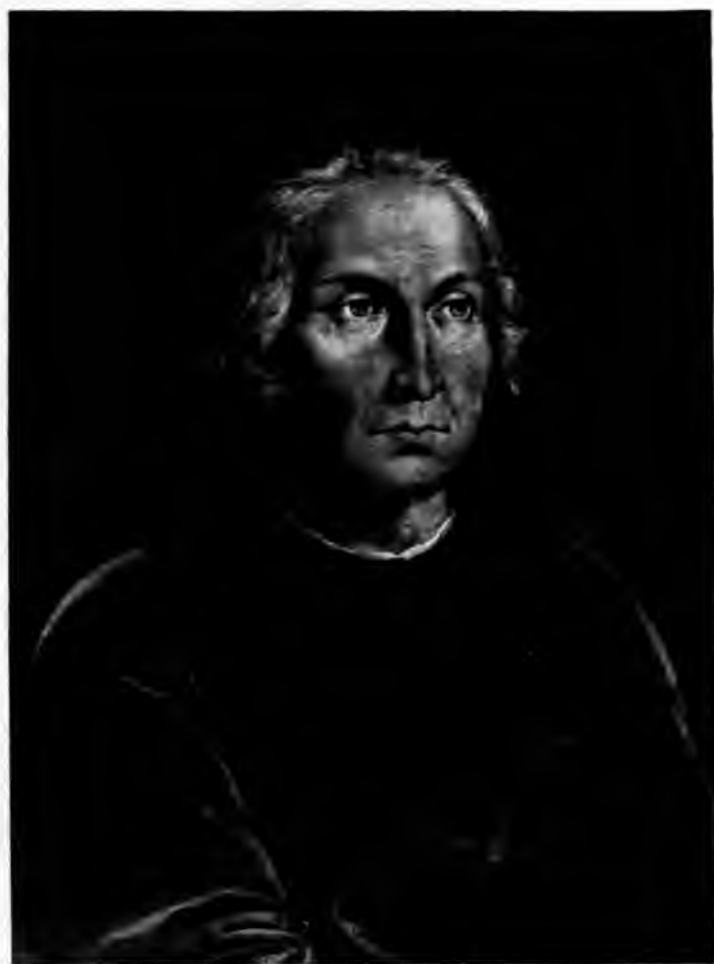


# **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**





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There is no authentic portrait of Columbus known to me. Several  
printed during his life, and many more many portraits of him have been  
copied from one or two early types exist in various libraries.  
The original of the portrait reproduced here hangs in the  
Museum at Madrid, and is perhaps as satisfactory as any that  
remains. It presents in some degree that  
blend of strength, earnestness, and weakness that we should expect  
to find in his face. The face cast in a large mould, is modelled  
by suffering and endurance; there is room behind the forehead  
for great conception; the eyes are the eyes of a dreamer; the  
mouth suggests a subtle and far-reaching purpose; the  
thin weakness enough to prevent many things in his strength.

THERE is no authentic portrait of Columbus known to have been painted during his lifetime, although many portraits of him, mostly copied from one or two early types, exist in various galleries. The original of the portrait reproduced here hangs in the Naval Museum at Madrid, and is perhaps as satisfactory as any such imaginary delineation can be. It presents in some degree that blend of strength, earnestness, and weakness that we should expect to find in his face. The face, cast in a large mould, is modelled by suffering and endurance; there is room behind the forehead for great conceptions; the eyes are the eyes of a dreamer; the mouth suggests a subtlety too delicate for large purposes, and the chin weakness enough to account for many things in his story.





CHRISTOPHER  
COLUMBUS  
AND THE NEW WORLD  
OF HIS DISCOVERY

A NARRATIVE BY  
FILSON YOUNG

WITH A NOTE ON THE NAVIGATION  
OF COLUMBUS'S FIRST VOYAGE BY  
THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN, K.P.

VOLUME II

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# **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**







[The main body of the page contains extremely faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the paper. The text is too light to transcribe accurately.]



I have a very strong feeling of being known to have seen  
him during his life. I have many friends of him who help  
copy from me to see what they exist in various pictures.  
The original of the portrait, especially the hands in the  
Museum at Berlin, but is perhaps a satisfactory as well as  
marginally. I believe that the hands in some degree that  
did not stand, especially and weakness that we should expect  
to find in the work. The feet are in a large model, is modeled  
by a friend of mine, and I believe that the feet are  
not too complete; the eyes are the eyes of a doctor, the  
mouth is a soft, but I believe that the lips are, and the  
hand is a very good one, but I believe that the hands are





27

**BOOK III**  
**DESPERATE REMEDIES**

**VOL. II**

**A**



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OF SEA TO THE OTHER, AND FROM THE  
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## CHAPTER I

### THE VOYAGE TO CUBA

**T**HE sight of the greater part of their fleet disappearing in the direction of home threw back the unstable Spanish colony into doubt and despondency. The brief encouragement afforded by Ojeda's report soon died away, and the actual discomforts of life in Isabella were more important than visionary luxuries that seemed to recede into the distance with the vanishing ships. The food supply was the cause of much discomfort; the jobbery and dishonesty which seem inseparable from the fitting out of a large expedition had stored the ships with bad wine and imperfectly cured provisions; and these combined with the unhealthy climate to produce a good deal of sickness. The feeling against Columbus, never far below the Spanish surface, began to express itself definitely in treacherous consultations and plots; and these were fomented by Bernal Diaz, the comptroller of the colony, who had access to Columbus's papers and had seen the letter sent by him to Spain. Columbus was at this time prostrated by an attack of fever, and Diaz took the opportunity to work the growing discontent up to the point of action. He told the colonists that Columbus had painted their condition in

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far too favourable terms; that he was deceiving them as well as the Sovereigns; and a plot was hatched to seize the ships that remained and sail for home, leaving Columbus behind to enjoy the riches that he had falsely boasted about. They were ready to take alarm at anything, and to believe anything one way or the other; and as they had believed Ojeda when he came back with his report of riches, now they believed Cado, the assayer, who said that even such gold as had been found was of a very poor and worthless quality. The mutiny developed fast; and a table of charges against Columbus, which was to be produced in Spain as a justification for it, had actually been drawn up when the Admiral, recovering from his illness, discovered what was on foot. He dealt promptly and firmly with it in his quarter-deck manner, which was always far more effective than his viceregal manner. Diaz was imprisoned and lodged in chains on board one of the ships, to be sent to Spain for trial; and the other ringleaders were punished also according to their deserts. The guns and ammunition were all stored together on one ship under a safe guard, and the mutiny was stamped out. But the Spaniards did not love Columbus any the better for it; did not any the more easily forgive him for being in command of them and for being a foreigner.

But it would never do for the colony to stagnate in Isabella, and Columbus decided to make a serious attempt,



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not merely to discover the gold of Cibao, but to get it. He therefore organised a military expedition of about 400 men, including artificers, miners, and carriers, with the little cavalry force that had been brought out from Spain. Every one who had armour wore it, flags and banners were carried, drums and trumpets were sounded; the horses were decked out in rich caparisons, and as glittering and formidable a show was made as possible. Leaving his brother James in command of the settlement, Columbus set out on the 12th of March to the interior of the island. Through the forest and up the mountain-side a road was cut by pioneers from among the aristocratic adventurers who had come with the party; which road, the first made in the New World, was called *El puerto de los Hidalgos*. The formidable, glittering cavalcade inspired the natives with terror and amazement; they had never seen horses before, and when one of the soldiers dismounted it seemed to them as though some terrifying two-headed, six-limbed beast had come asunder. What with their fright of the horses and their desire to possess the trinkets that were carried they were very friendly and hospitable, and supplied the expedition with plenty of food. At last, after passing mountain ranges that made their hearts faint, and rich valleys that made them hopeful again, the explorers came to the mountains of Cibao, and passing over the first range found themselves in a little valley at the foot of the hills where a river wound round a fertile plain and there was ample accommodation for an encampment. There were the usual signs of gold,

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and Columbus saw in the brightly coloured stones of the river-bed evidence of unbounded wealth in precious stones. At last he had come to the place! He who had doubted so much, and whose faith had wavered, had now been led to a place where he could touch and handle the gold and jewels of his desire; and he therefore called the place Saint Thomas. He built a fort here, leaving a garrison of fifty-six men under the command of Pedro Margarite to collect gold from the natives, and himself returned to Isabella, which he reached at the end of March.

Enforced absence from the thing he has organised is a great test of efficiency in any man. The world is full of men who can do things themselves; but those who can organise from the industry of their men a machine which will steadily perform the work whether the organiser is absent or present are rare indeed. Columbus was one of the first class. His own power and personality generally gave him some kind of mastery over any circumstances in which he was immediately concerned; but let him be absent for a little time, and his organisation went to pieces. No one was better than he at conducting a one-man concern; and his conduct of the first voyage, so long as he had his company under his immediate command, was a model of efficiency. But when the material under his command began to grow and to be divided into groups his life became a succession of ups and downs. While he



## THE VOYAGE TO CUBA

was settling and disciplining one group mutiny and disorder would attack the other ; and when he went to attend to them, the first one immediately fell into confusion again. He dealt with the discontent in Isabella, organising the better disposed part of it in productive labour, and himself marching the malcontents into something like discipline and order, leaving them at Saint Thomas, as we have seen, usefully collecting gold. But while he was away the people at Isabella had got themselves into trouble again, and when he arrived there on the morning of March 29th he found the town in a deplorable condition. The lake beside which the city had been built, and which seemed so attractive and healthy a spot, turned out to be nothing better than a fever trap. Drained from the malarial marshes, its sickly exhalations soon produced an epidemic that incapacitated more than half the colony and interrupted the building operations. The time of those who were well was entirely occupied with the care of those who were sick, and all productive work was at a standstill. The reeking virgin soil had produced crops in an incredibly short time, and the sowings of January were ready for reaping in the beginning of April. But there was no one to reap them, and the further cultivation of the ground had necessarily been neglected.

The faint-hearted Spaniards, who never could meet any trouble without grumbling, were now in the depths of despair and angry discontent ; and it had not pleased them to be put on a short allowance of even the unwholesome provisions that remained from the original store.

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A couple of rude hand-mills had been erected for the making of flour, and as food was the first necessity Columbus immediately put all the able-bodied men in the colony, whatever their rank, to the elementary manual work of grinding. Friar Buil and the twelve Benedictine brothers who were with him thought this a wise order, assuming of course that as clerics they would not be asked to work. But great was their astonishment, and loud and angry their criticism of the Admiral, when they found that they also were obliged to labour with their hands. But Columbus was firm; there were absolutely no exceptions made; hidalgo and priest had to work alongside of sailor and labourer; and the curses of the living mingled with those of the dying on the man whose boastful words had brought them to such a place and such a condition.

It was only in the nature of things that news should now arrive of trouble at Saint Thomas. Gold and women again; instead of bartering or digging, the Spaniards had been stealing; and discipline had been relaxed, with the usual disastrous results with regard to the women of the adjacent native tribes. Pedro Margarite sent a nervous message to Columbus expressing his fear that Caonabo, the native king, should be exasperated to the point of attacking them again. Columbus therefore despatched Ojeda in command of a force of 350 armed men to Saint Thomas with instructions that he was to take over the command of that post, while Margarite was to take out an expedition in search of Caonabo whom, with his brothers, Margarite was instructed to capture at all costs.

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Having thus set things going in the interior, and once more restored Isabella to something like order, he decided to take three ships and attempt to discover the coast of Cathay. The old *Niña*, the *San Juan*, and the *Cordera*, three small caravels, were provisioned for six months and manned by a company of fifty-two men. Francisco Niño went once more with the Admiral as pilot, and the faithful Juan de la Cosa was taken to draw charts; one of the monks also, to act as chaplain. The Admiral had a steward, a secretary, ten seamen and six boys to complete the company on the *Niña*. The *San Juan* was commanded by Alonso Perez Roldan and the *Cordera* by Christoval Niño. Diego was again left in command of the colony, with four counsellors, Friar Buñ, Fernandez Coronel, Alonso Sanchez Carvajal, and Juan de Luxan, to assist his authority.

The Admiral sailed on April 24th, steering to the westward and touching at La Navidad before he bore away to the island of Cuba, the southern shore of which it was now his intention to explore. At one of his first anchorages he discovered a native feast going on, and when the boats from his ships pulled ashore the feasters fled in terror—the hungry Spaniards finishing their meal for them. Presently, however, the feasters were induced to come back, and Columbus with soft speeches made them a compensation for the food that had been taken, and produced a favourable impression, as his habit was; with the result that all along the coast he was kindly received by the natives, who supplied him with food and fresh fruit





## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

in return for trinkets. At the harbour now known as Santiago de Cuba, where he anchored on May 2nd, he had what seemed like authentic information of a great island to the southward which was alleged to be the source of all the gold. The very compasses of Columbus's ships seem by this time to have become demagnetised, and to have pointed only to gold; for no sooner had he heard this report than he bore away to the south in pursuit of that faint yellow glitter that had now quite taken the place of the original inner light of faith.

The low coast of Jamaica, hazy and blue at first, but afterwards warming into a golden belt crowned by the paler and deeper greens of the foliage, was sighted first by Columbus on Sunday, May 4th; and he anchored the next day in the beautiful harbour of Saint Anne, to which he gave the name of Santa Gloria. To the island itself he gave the name of Santiago, which however has never displaced its native name of Jamaica. The dim blue mountains and clumps of lofty trees about the bay were wonderful even to Columbus, whose eyes must by this time have been growing accustomed to the beauty of the West Indies, and he lost his heart to Jamaica from the first moment that his eyes rested on its green and golden shores. Perhaps he was by this time a little out of conceit with Hayti; but be that as it may he retracted all the superlatives he had ever used for the other lands of his discovery, and bestowed them in his heart upon Jamaica.



## THE VOYAGE TO CUBA

He was not humanly so well received as he had been on the other islands, for when he cast anchor the natives came out in canoes threatening hostilities and had to be appeased with red caps and hawks' bells. Next day, however, Columbus wished to careen his ships, and sailed a little to the west until he found a suitable beach at Puerto Bueno; and as he approached the shore some large canoes filled with painted and feathered warriors came out and attacked his ships, showering arrows and javelins, and whooping and screaming at the Spaniards. The guns were discharged, and an armed party sent ashore in a boat, and the natives were soon put to flight. There was no renewal of hostilities; the next day the local cacique came down offering provisions and help; presents were exchanged, and cordial relations established. Columbus noticed that the Jamaicans seemed to be a much more virile community than either the Cubans or the people of Española. They had enormous canoes hollowed out of single mahogany trees, some of them 96 feet long and 8 feet broad, which they handled with the greatest ease and dexterity; they had a merry way with them too, were quick of apprehension and clever at expressing their meaning, and in their domestic utensils and implements they showed an advance in civilisation on the other islanders of the group. Columbus did some trade with the islanders as he sailed along the coast, but he does not seem to have believed much in the gold story, for after sailing to the western point of the island he bore away



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to the north again and sighted the coast of Cuba on the 18th of May.

The reason why Columbus kept returning to the coast of Cuba was that he believed it to be the mainland of Asia. The unlettered natives, who had never read Marco Polo, told him that it was an island, although no man had ever seen the end of it; but Columbus did not believe them, and sailed westward in the belief that he would presently come upon the country and city of Cathay. Soon he found himself in the wonderful labyrinth of islets and sandbanks off the south coast; and because of the wonderful colours of their flowers and climbing plants he called them *Jardin de la Reina* or Queen's Garden. Dangerous as the navigation through these islands was, he preferred to risk the shoals and sandbanks rather than round them out at sea to the southward, for he believed them to be the islands which, according to Marco Polo, lay in masses along the coast of Cathay. In this adventure he had a very hard time of it; the lead had to be used all the time, the ships often had to be towed, the wind veered round from every quarter of the compass, and there were squalls and tempests, and currents that threatened to set them ashore. By great good fortune, however, they managed to get through the Archipelago without mishap. By June 3rd they were sailing along the coast again, and Columbus had some conversation with an old cacique who told him of a province called Mangon (or so Columbus understood



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him) that lay to the west. Sir John Mandeville had described the province of Mangi as being the richest in Cathay; and of course, thought the Admiral, this must be the place. He went westward past the Gulf of Xagua and got into the shallow sandy waters, now known as the Jardinillos Bank, where the sea was whitened with particles of sand. When he had got clear of this shoal water he stood across a broad bay towards a native settlement where he was able to take in yams, fruit, fish, and fresh water.

But this excitement and hard work were telling on the Admiral, and when a native told him that there was a tribe close by with long tails, he believed him; and later, when one of his men, coming back from a shore expedition, reported that he had seen some figures in a forest wearing white robes, Columbus believed that they were the people with the tails, who wore a long garment to conceal them.

He was moving in a world of enchantment; the weather was like no weather in any known part of the world; there were fogs, black and thick, which blew down suddenly from the low marshy land, and blew away again as suddenly; the sea was sometimes white as milk, sometimes black as pitch, sometimes purple, sometimes green; scarlet cranes stood looking at them as they slid past the low sandbanks; the warm foggy air smelt of roses; shoals of turtles covered the waters, black butterflies circled in the mist; and the fever that was beginning to work in the Admiral's blood mounted to his brain, so that



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in this land of bad dreams his fixed ideas began to dominate all his other faculties, and he decided that he must certainly be on the coast of Cathay, in the magic land described by Marco Polo.

There is nothing which illustrates the arbitrary and despotic government of sea life so well as the nautical phrase "make it so." The very hours of the day, slipping westward under the keel of an east-going ship, are "made" by rigid decree; the captain takes his observation of sun or stars, and announces the position of the ship to be at a certain spot on the surface of the globe; any errors of judgment or deficiencies of method are covered by the words "make it so." And in all the elusive phenomena surrounding him the fevered brain of the Admiral discerned evidence that he was really upon the coast of Asia, although there was no method by which he could place the matter beyond a doubt. The word Asia was not printed upon the sands of Cuba, as it might be upon a map; the lines of longitude did not lie visibly across the surface of the sea; there was nothing but sea and land, the Admiral's charts, and his own conviction. Therefore Columbus decided to "make it so." If there was no other way of being sure that this was the coast of Cathay, he would decree it to be the coast of Cathay by a legal document and by oaths and affidavits. He would force upon the members of his expedition a conviction at least equal to his own; and instead of pursuing



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any further the coast that stretched interminably west and south-west, he decided to say, in effect, and once and for all, "Let this be the mainland of Asia."

He called his secretary to him and made him draw up a form of oath or testament,<sup>1</sup> to which every member of the expedition was required to subscribe, affirming that the land off which they were then lying (12th June 1494), was the mainland of the Indies and that it was possible to return to Spain by land from that place; and every officer who should ever deny it in the future was laid under a penalty of ten thousand maravedis, and every ship's boy or seaman under a penalty of one hundred lashes; and in addition, any member of the expedition denying it in the future was to have his tongue cut out.

No one will pretend that this was the action of a sane man; neither will any one wonder that Columbus was something less than sane after all he had gone through, and with the beginnings of a serious illness already in his blood. His achievement was slipping from his grasp; the gold had not been found, the wonders of the East had not been discovered; and it was his instinct to secure something from the general wreck that seemed to be falling about him, and to force his own dreams to come true, that caused him to cut this grim and fantastic legal caper off the coast of Cuba. He thought it at the time unlikely, seeing the difficulties of navigation that he had gone through, which he might be pardoned for regarding as insuperable to a less skilful mariner, that any one should

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix F.



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ever come that way again ; even he himself said that he would never risk his life again in such a place. He wished his journey, therefore, not to have been made in vain ; and as he himself believed that he had stood on the mainland of Asia he took care to take back with him the only kind of evidence that was possible—namely, the sworn affidavits of the ships' crews.

Perhaps in his madness he would really have gone on and tried to reach the Golden Chersonesus of Ptolemy, which according to Marco Polo lay just beyond, and so to steer homeward round Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope ; in which case he would either have been lost or would have discovered Mexico. The crews, however, would not hear of the voyage being continued westward. The ships were leaking and the salt water was spoiling the already doubtful provisions and he was forced to turn back. He stood to the south-east, and reached the Isle of Pines, to which he gave the name of Evangelista, where the water-casks were filled, and from there he tried to sail back to the east. But he found himself surrounded by islands and banks in every direction, which made any straight course impossible. He sailed south and east and west and north, and found himself always back again in the middle of this charmed group of islands. He spent almost a month trying to escape from them, and once his ship went ashore on a sandbank and was only warped off with the greatest difficulty. On July 7th he was



## THE VOYAGE TO CUBA

back again in the region of the "Queen's Gardens," from which he stood across to the coast of Cuba.

He anchored and landed there, and being in great distress and difficulty he had a large cross erected on the mainland, and had mass said. When the Spaniards rose from their knees they saw an old native man observing them; and the old man came and sat down beside Columbus and talked to him through the interpreter. He told him that he had been in Jamaica and Española as well as in Cuba, and that the coming of the Spaniards had caused great distress to the people of the islands.

He then spoke to Columbus about religion, and the gist of what he said was something like this: "The performance of your worship seems good to me. You believe that this life is not everything; so do we; and I know that when this life is over there are two places reserved for me, to one of which I shall certainly go; one happy and beautiful, one dreadful and miserable. Joy and kindness reign in the one place, which is good enough for the best of men; and they will go there who while they have lived on the earth have loved peace and goodness, and who have never robbed or killed or been unkind. The other place is evil and full of shadows, and is reserved for those who disturb and hurt the sons of men; how important it is, therefore, that one should do no evil or injury in this world!"

Columbus replied with a brief statement of his own theological views, and added that he had been sent to find out if there were any persons in those islands who





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did evil to others, such as the Caribs or cannibals, and that if so he had come to punish them. The effect of this ingenuous speech was heightened by a gift of hawks' bells and pieces of broken glass; upon receiving which the good old man fell down on his knees, and said that the Spaniards must surely have come from heaven.

A few days later the voyage to the south-east was resumed, and some progress was made along the coast. But contrary winds arose which made it impossible for the ships to round Cape Cruz, and Columbus decided to employ the time of waiting in completing his explorations in Jamaica. He therefore sailed due south until he once more sighted the beautiful northern coast of that island, following it to the west and landing, as his custom was, whenever he saw a good harbour or anchorage. The wind was still from the east, and he spent a month beating to the eastward along the south coast of the island, fascinated by its beauty, and willing to stay and explore it, but prevented by the discontent of his crews, who were only anxious to get back to Española. He had friendly interviews with many of the natives of Jamaica, and at almost the last harbour at which he touched a cacique with his wife and family and complete retinue came off in canoes to the ship, begging Columbus to take him and his household back to Spain.

Columbus considers this family, and thinks wistfully how well they would look in Barcelona. Father dressed



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in a cap of gold and green jewels, necklace and earrings of the same; mother decked out in similar regalia, with the addition of a small cotton apron; two sons and five brothers dressed principally in a feather or two; two daughters mother-naked, except that the elder, a handsome girl of eighteen, wears a jewelled girdle from which depends a tablet as big as an ivy leaf, made of various coloured stones embroidered on cotton. What an exhibit for one of the triumphal processions: "Native royal family, complete"! But Columbus thinks also of the scarcity of provisions on board his ships, and wonders how all these royalties would like to live on a pint of sour wine and a rotten biscuit each per day. Alas! there is not sour wine and rotten biscuit enough for his own people; it is still a long way to Española; and he is obliged to make polite excuses, and to say that he will come back for his majesty another time.

It was on the 20th of August that Columbus, having the day before seen the last of the dim blue hills of Jamaica, sighted again the long peninsula of Hayti, called by him Cape San Miguel, but known to us as Cape Tiburon; although it was not until he was hailed by a cacique who called out to him "*Almirante, Almirante*" that the sea-worn mariners realised with joy that the island must be Española. But they were a long way from Isabella yet. They sailed along the south coast, meeting contrary winds, and at one point landing nine



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men who were to cross the island, and try to reach Isabella by land. Week followed week, and they made very poor progress. In the beginning of September they were caught in a severe tempest, which separated the ships for a time, and held the Admiral weather-bound for eight days. There was an eclipse of the moon during this period, and he took advantage of it to make an observation for longitude, by which he found himself to be 5 hrs. 23 min., or  $80^{\circ} 40'$ , west of Cadiz. In this observation there is an error of eighteen degrees, the true longitude of the island of Saona, where the observation was taken, being  $62^{\circ} 20'$  west of Cadiz; and the error is accounted for partly by the inaccuracy of the tables of Regiomontanus and partly by the crudity and inexactness of the Admiral's methods. On the 24th of September they at last reached the easternmost point of Española, named by Columbus San Rafael. They stood to the east a little longer, and discovered the little island of Mona, which lies between Española and Puerto Rico; and from thence shaped their course west-by-north for Isabella. And no sooner had the course been set for home than the Admiral suddenly and completely collapsed; was carried unconscious to his cabin; and lay there in such extremity that his companions gave him up for lost.

It is no ordinary strain to which poor Christopher has succumbed. He has been five months at sea, sharing



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with the common sailors their bad food and weary vigils, but bearing alone on his own shoulders a weight of anxiety of which they knew nothing. Watch has relieved watch on his ships, but there has been no one to relieve him, or to lift the burden from his mind. The eyes of a nation are upon him, watchful and jealous eyes that will not forgive him any failure; and to earn their approval he has taken this voyage of five months, during which he has only been able to forget his troubles in the brief hours of slumber. Strange uncharted seas, treacherous winds and currents, drenching surges have all done their part in bringing him to this pass; and his body, now starved on rotten biscuits, now glutted with unfamiliar fruits, has been preyed upon by the tortured mind as the mind itself has been shaken and loosened by the weakness of the body. He lies there in his cabin in a deep stupor; memory, sight, and all sensation completely gone from him; dead but for the heart that beats on faintly, and the breath that comes and goes through the parted lips. Niño, de la Cosa, and the others come and look at him, shake their heads, and go away again. There is nothing to be done; perhaps they will get him back to Isabella in time to bury him there; perhaps not.

And meanwhile they are back again in calm and safe waters, and coasting a familiar shore; and the faithful little *Niña*, shaking out her wings in the sunny breezes, trips under the guidance of unfamiliar hands towards her moorings in the Bay of Isabella. It is a sad company that she



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carries; for in the cabin, deaf and blind and unconscious, there lies the heart and guiding spirit of the New World. He does not hear the talking of the waters past the *Niña's* timbers, does not hear the stamping on the deck and shortening of sail and unstopping of cables and getting out of gear; does not hear the splash of the anchor, nor the screams of birds that rise circling from the shore. Does not hear the greetings and the news; does not see bending over him a kind, helpful, and well-beloved face. He sees and hears and knows nothing; and in that state of rest and absence from the body they carry him, still living and breathing, ashore.



## CHAPTER II

### THE CONQUEST OF ESPAÑOLA

**W**E must now go back to the time when Columbus, having made what arrangements he could for the safety of Española, left it under the charge of his brother James.

Ojeda had duly marched into the interior and taken over the command of Fort St. Thomas, thus setting free Margarite, according to his instructions, to lead an expedition for purposes of reconnoitre and demonstration through the island. These, at any rate, were Margarite's orders, duly communicated to him by Ojeda; but Margarite will have none of them. Well born, well educated, well bred, he ought at least to have the spirit to carry out orders so agreeable to a gentleman of adventure; but unfortunately, although Margarite is a gentleman by birth, he is a low and dishonest dog by nature. He cannot take the decent course, cannot even play the man, and take his share in the military work of the colony. Instead of cutting paths through the forest, and exhibiting his military strength in an orderly and proper way as the Admiral intended he should, he marches forth from St. Thomas, on hearing that Columbus has sailed away, and encamps no further off than the

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Vega Real, that pleasant place of green valleys and groves and murmuring rivers. He encamps there, takes up his quarters there, will not budge from there for any Admiral; and as for James Columbus and his counsellors, they may go to the devil for all Margarite cares. One of them at least, he knows—Friar Buñ—is not such a fool as to sit down under the command of that solemn-faced, uncouth young snip from Genoa; and doubtless when he is tired of the Vega Real he and Buñ can arrange something between them. In the meantime, here is a very beautiful sunshiny place, abounding in all kinds of provisions; food for more than one kind of appetite, as he has noticed when he has thrust his rude way into the native houses and seen the shapely daughters of the islanders. He has a little army of soldiers to forage for him; they can get him food and gold, and they are useful also in those other marauding expeditions designed to replenish the *seraglio* that he has established in his camp; and if they like to do a little marauding and woman-stealing on their own account, it is no affair of his, and may keep the devils in a good temper. Thus Don Pedro Margarite to himself.

The peaceable and gentle natives soon began to resent these gross doings. To robbery succeeded outrage, and to outrage murder—all three committed in the very houses of the natives; and they began to murmur, to withhold that goodwill which the Spaniards had so sorely tried, and to develop a threatening attitude that was soon communicated to the natives in the vicinity of



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Isabella, and came under the notice of James Columbus and his council. Grave, bookish, wool-weaving young James, not used to military affairs, and not at all comfortable in his command, can think of no other expedient than to write a letter to Margarite remonstrating with him for his licentious excesses and reminding him of the Admiral's instructions, which were being neglected.

Margarite receives the letter and reads it with a contemptuous laugh. He is not going to be ordered about by a family of Italian wool-weavers, and the only change in his conduct is that he becomes more and more careless and impudent, extending the area of his lawless operations, and making frequent visits to Isabella itself, swaggering under the very nose of solemn James, and soon deep in consultation with Friar Buil.

At this moment, that is to say very soon after the departure of Christopher on his voyage to Cuba and Jamaica, three ships dropped anchor in the Bay of Isabella. They were laden with the much-needed supplies from Spain, and had been sent out under the command of Bartholomew Columbus. It will be remembered that when Christopher reached Spain after his first voyage one of his first cares had been to write to Bartholomew, asking him to join him. The letter, doubtless after many wanderings, had found Bartholomew in France at the court of Charles VIII., by whom he was held in some esteem; in fact it was Charles who provided him with the necessary money for his journey to Spain, for Bartholomew had not greatly prospered, in spite of his voyage with Diaz to the



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Cape of Good Hope and of his having been in England making exploration proposals at the court of Henry VII. He had arrived in Spain after Columbus had sailed again, and had presented himself at court with his two nephews, Ferdinand and Diego, both of whom were now in the service of Prince Juan as pages. Ferdinand and Isabella seem to have received Bartholomew kindly. They liked this capable navigator, who had much of Christopher's charm of manner, and was more a man of the world than he. Much more practical also; Ferdinand would be sure to like him better than he liked Christopher, whose pompous manner and long-winded speeches bored him. Bartholomew was quick, alert, decisive and practical; he was an accomplished navigator—almost as accomplished as Columbus, as it appeared. He was offered the command of the three ships which were being prepared to go to Española with supplies; and he duly arrived there after a prosperous voyage. It will be remembered that Christopher had, so far as we know, kept the secret of the road to the new islands; and Bartholomew can have had nothing more to guide him than a rough chart showing the islands in a certain latitude, and the distance to be run towards them by dead-reckoning. That he should have made an exact landfall and sailed into the Bay of Isabella, never having been there before, was a certificate of the highest skill in navigation.

Unfortunately it was James who was in charge of the colony; Bartholomew had no authority, for once his ships had arrived in port his mission was accomplished until



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Christopher should return and find him employment. He was therefore forced to sit still and watch his young brother struggling with the unruly Spaniards. His presence, however, was no doubt a further exasperation to the malcontents. There existed in Isabella a little faction of some of the aristocrats who had never forgiven Columbus for employing them in degrading manual labour; who had never forgiven him in fact for being there at all, and in command over them. And now here was another wool-weaver, or son of a wool-weaver, come to put his finger in the pie that Christopher has apparently provided so carefully for himself and his family.


Margarite and Bull and some others, treacherous scoundrels all of them, but clannish to their own race and class, decide that they will put up with it no longer; they are tired of Española in any case, and Margarite, from too free indulgence among the native women, has contracted an unpleasant disease, and thinks that a sea voyage and the attentions of a Spanish doctor will be good for him. It is easy for them to put their plot into execution. There are the ships; there is nothing for them to do but take a couple of them, provision them, and set sail for Spain, where they trust to their own influence, and the story they will be able to tell of the falseness of the Admiral's promises, to excuse their breach of discipline. And sail they do, snapping their fingers at the wool-weavers.



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James and Bartholomew were perhaps glad to be rid of them, but their relief was tempered with anxiety as to the result on Christopher's reputation and favour when the malcontents should have made their false representations at Court. The brothers were powerless to do anything in that matter, however, and the state of affairs in Española demanded their close attention. Margarite's little army, finding itself without even the uncertain restraint of its commander, now openly mutinied and abandoned itself to the wildest excesses. It became scattered and disbanded, and little groups of soldiers went wandering about the country, robbing and outraging and carrying cruelty and oppression among the natives. Long-suffering as these were, and patiently as they bore with the unspeakable barbarities of the Spanish soldiers, there came a point beyond which their forbearance would not go. An aching spirit of unforgiveness and revenge took the place of their former gentleness and compliance; and here and there, when the Spaniards were more brutal and less cautious than was their brutal and incautious habit, the natives fell upon them and took swift and bloody revenge. Small parties found themselves besieged and put to death: whole villages, whose hospitality had been abused, cut off wandering groups of the marauders and burned the houses where they lodged. The disaffection spread; and Caonabo, who had never abated his resentment at the Spanish intrusion into the island, thought the time had come to make another demonstration of native power.

Fortunately for the Spaniards his object was the fort



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of St. Thomas, commanded by the alert Ojeda ; and this young man, who was not easily to be caught napping, had timely intelligence of his intention. When Caonabo, mustering ten thousand men, suddenly surrounded the fort and prepared to attack it, he found the fifty Spaniards of the garrison more than ready for him, and his naked savages dared not advance within the range of the cross-bows and arquebuses. Caonabo tried to besiege the station, watching every gorge and road through which supplies could reach it, but Ojeda made sallies and raids upon the native force, under which it became thinned and discouraged ; and Caonabo had finally to withdraw to his own territory.

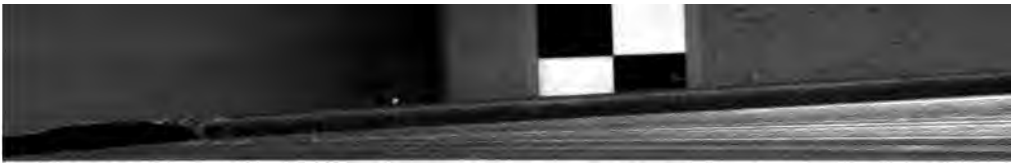
But he was not yet beaten. He decided upon another and much larger enterprise, which was to induce the other caciques of the island to co-operate with him in an attack upon Isabella, the population of which he knew would have been much thinned and weakened by disease. The island was divided into five native provinces. The north-eastern part, named Marien, was under the rule of Guacanagari, whose headquarters were near the abandoned La Navidad. The remaining eastern part of the island, called Higuay, was under a chief named Cotabanama. The western province was Xaragua, governed by one Behechio, whose sister, Anacaona, was the wife of Caonabo. The middle of the island was divided into two provinces—that which extended from the northern coast to the Cibao mountains and included the Vega Real being governed by Guarionex, and that which extended from the Cibao moun-



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tains to the south being governed by Caonabo. All these rulers were more or less embittered by the outrages and cruelties of the Spaniards, and all agreed to join with Caonabo except Guacanagari. That loyal soul, so faithful to what he knew of good, shocked and distressed as he was by outrages from which his own people had suffered no less than the others, could not bring himself to commit what he regarded as a breach of the laws of hospitality. It was upon his shores that Columbus had first landed; and although it was his own country and his own people whose wrongs were to be avenged, he could not bring himself to turn traitor to the brave Admiral with whom, in those happy days of the past, he had enjoyed so much pleasant intercourse. His refusal to co-operate delayed the plan of Caonabo, who directed the island coalition against Guacanagari himself in order to bring him to reason. He was attacked by the neighbouring chiefs; one of his wives was killed and another captured; but still he would not swerve from his ideal of conduct.

The first thing that Columbus recognised when he opened his eyes after his long period of lethargy and insensibility was the face of his brother Bartholomew bend-over him where he lay in bed in his own house at Española. Nothing could have been more welcome to him, sick, lonely and discouraged as he was, than the presence of that strong, helpful brother; and from the time when Bartholomew's friendly face first greeted him he began to



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get better. His first act, as soon as he was strong enough to sign a paper, was to appoint Bartholomew to the office of Adelantado, or Lieutenant-Governor—an indiscreet and rather tactless proceeding which, although it was not outside his power as a bearer of the royal seal, was afterwards resented by King Ferdinand as a piece of impudent encroachment upon the royal prerogative. But Columbus was unable to transact business himself, and James was manifestly of little use; the action was natural enough.

In the early days of his convalescence he had another pleasant experience, in the shape of a visit from Guacanagari, who came to express his concern at the Admiral's illness, and to tell him the story of what had been going on in his absence. The gentle creature referred again with tears to the massacre at La Navidad, and again asserted that innocence of any hand in it which Columbus had happily never doubted; and he told him also of the secret league against Isabella, of his own refusal to join it, and of the attacks to which he had consequently been subjected. It must have been an affecting meeting for these two, who represented the first friendship formed between the Old World and the New, who were both of them destined to suffer in the impact of civilisation and savagery, and whose names and characters were happily destined to survive that impact, and to triumph over the oblivion of centuries.

So long as the native population remained hostile and unconquered by kindness or force, it was impossible



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to work securely at the development of the colony; and Columbus, however regretfully, had come to feel that circumstances more or less obliged him to use force. At first he did not quite realise the gravity of the position, and attempted to conquer or reconcile the natives in little groups. Guarionex, the cacique of the Vega Real, was by gifts and smooth words soothed back into a friendship which was consolidated by the marriage of his daughter with Columbus's native interpreter. It was useless, however, to try and make friends with Caonabo, that fierce irreconcilable; and it was felt that only by stratagem could he be secured. No sooner was this suggested than Ojeda volunteered for the service. Amid the somewhat slow-moving figures of our story this man appears as lively as a flea; and he dances across our pages in a sensation of intrepid feats of arms that make his great popularity among the Spaniards easily credible to us. He did not know what fear was; he was always ready for a fight of any kind; a quarrel in the streets of Madrid, a duel, a fight with a man or a wild beast, a brawl in a tavern or a military expedition, were all the same to him, if only they gave him an opportunity for fighting. He had a little picture of the Virgin hung round his neck, by which he swore, and to which he prayed; he had never been so much as scratched in all his affrays, and he believed that he led a charmed life. Who would go out against Caonabo, the Goliath of the island? He, little David Ojeda, he would go out and undertake to fetch the giant back with him; and all he wanted was ten men,



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a pair of handcuffs, a handful of trinkets, horses for the whole of his company, and his little image or picture of the Virgin.

Columbus may have smiled at this proposal, but he knew his man; and Ojeda duly departed with his horses and his ten men. Plunging into the forest, he made his way through sixty leagues of dense undergrowth until he arrived in the very heart of Caonabo's territory and presented himself at the chief's house. The chief was at home, and, not unimpressed by the valour of Ojeda, who represented himself as coming on a friendly mission, received him under conditions of truce. He had an eye for military prowess, this Caonabo, and something of the lion's heart in him; he recognised in Ojeda the little man who kept him so long at bay outside Fort St. Thomas; and, after the manner of lion-hearted people, liked him none the worse for that.

Ojeda proposes that the King should accompany him to Isabella to make peace. No, says Caonabo. Then Ojeda tries another way. There is a poetical side to this big fighting savage, and often in more friendly days, when the bell in the little chapel of Isabella has been ringing for Vespers, the cacique has been observed sitting alone on some hill listening, enchanted by the strange silver voice that floated to him across the sunset. The bell has indeed become something of a personality in the island: all the neighbouring savages listen to its voice with awe and fascination, pausing with inclined heads whenever it begins to speak from its turret.





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Ojeda talks to Caonabo about the bell, and tells him what a wonderful thing it is; tells him also that if he will come with him to Isabella he shall have the bell for a present. Poetry and public policy struggle together in Caonabo's heart, but poetry wins; the great powerful savage, urged thereto by his childish lion-heart, will come to Isabella if they will give him the bell. He sets forth, accompanied by a native retinue, and by Ojeda and his ten horsemen. Presently they come to a river and Ojeda produces his bright manacles; tells the King that they are royal ornaments and that he has been instructed to bestow them upon Caonabo as a sign of honour. But first he must come alone to the river and bathe, which he does. Then he must sit with Ojeda upon his horse; which he does. Then he must have fitted on to him the shining silver trinkets; which he does, the great grinning giant, pleased with his toys. Then, to show him what it is like to be on a horse, Ojeda canters gently round in widening and ever widening circles; a turn of his spurred heels, and the canter becomes a gallop, the circle becomes a straight line, and Caonabo is on the road to Isabella. When they are well beyond reach of the natives they pause and tie Caonabo securely into his place; and by this treachery bring him into Isabella, where he is imprisoned in the Admiral's house.

The sulky giant, brought thus into captivity, refuses to bend his proud, stubborn heart into even a form of submission. He takes no notice of Columbus, and pays him no honour, although honour is paid to himself as



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a captive king. He sits there behind his bars gnawing his fingers, listening to the voice of the bell that has lured him into captivity, and thinking of the free open life which he is to know no more. Though he will pay no deference to the Admiral, will not even rise when he enters his presence, there is one person he holds in honour, and that is Ojeda. He will not rise when the Admiral comes; but when Ojeda comes, small as he is, and without external state, the chief makes his obeisance to him. The Admiral he sets at defiance, and boasts of his destruction of La Navidad, and of his plan to destroy Isabella; Ojeda he respects and holds in honour, as being the only man in the island brave enough to come into his house and carry him off a captive. There is a good deal of the sportsman in Caonabo.

The immediate result of the capture of Caonabo was to rouse the islanders to further hostilities, and one of the brothers of the captive king led a force of seven thousand men to the vicinity of St. Thomas, to which Ojeda, however, had in the meantime returned. His small force was augmented by some men despatched by Bartholomew Columbus on receipt of an urgent message; and in command of this force Ojeda sallied forth against the natives and attacked them furiously on horse and on foot, killing a great part of them, taking others prisoner, and putting the rest to flight. This was the beginning of the end of the island resistance. A month



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or two later, when Columbus was better, he and Bartholomew together mustered the whole of their available army and marched out in search of the native force, which he knew had been rallied and greatly augmented.

The two forces met near the present town of Santiago, in the plain known as the Savanna of Matanza. The Spanish force was divided into three main divisions, under the command of Christopher and Bartholomew Columbus and Ojeda respectively. These three divisions attacked the Indians simultaneously from different points, Ojeda throwing his cavalry upon them, riding them down, and cutting them to pieces. Drums were beaten and trumpets blown; the guns were fired from the cover of the trees; and a pack of bloodhounds, which had been sent out from Spain with Bartholomew, were let loose upon the natives and tore their bodies to pieces. It was an easy and horrible victory. The native force was estimated by Columbus at one hundred thousand men, although we shall probably be nearer the mark if we reduce that estimate by one half.

The powers of hell were let loose that day into the Earthly Paradise. The guns mowed red lines of blood through the solid ranks of the natives; the great Spanish horses trod upon and crushed their writhing bodies, in which arrows and lances continually stuck and quivered; and the ferocious dogs, barking and growling, seized the naked Indians by the throat, dragged them to the ground, and tore out their very entrails. . . . Well for us that the horrible noises of that day are silent now; well for the



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world that that place of bloodshed and horror has grown green again; better for us and for the world if those cries had never been heard, and that quiet place had never received a stain that centuries of green succeeding springtides can never wash away.

It was some time before this final battle that the convalescence of the Admiral was further assisted by the arrival of four ships commanded by Antonio Torres, who must have passed, out of sight and somewhere on the high seas, the ships bearing Buil and Margarite back to Spain. He brought with him a large supply of fresh provisions for the colony, and a number of genuine colonists, such as fishermen, carpenters, farmers, mechanics, and millers. And better still he brought a letter from the Sovereigns, dated the 16th of August 1494, which did much to cheer the shaken spirits of Columbus. The words with which he had freighted his empty ships had not been in vain; and in this reply to them he was warmly commended for his diligence, and reminded that he enjoyed the unshaken confidence of the Sovereigns. They proposed that a caravel should sail every month from Spain and from Isabella, bearing intelligence of the colony and also, it was hoped, some of its products. In a general letter addressed to the colony the settlers were reminded of the obedience they owed to the Admiral, and were instructed to obey him in all things under the penalty of heavy fines. They invited Columbus to come



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back if he could in order to be present at the convention which was to establish the line of demarcation between Spanish and Portuguese possessions; or if he could not come himself to send his brother Bartholomew. There were reasons, however, which made this difficult. Columbus wished to despatch the ships back again as speedily as possible, in order that news of him might help to counteract the evil rumours that he knew Buil and Margarite would be spreading. He himself was as yet (February 1494) too ill to travel; and during his illness Bartholomew could not easily be spared. It was therefore decided to send home James, who could most easily be spared, and whose testimony as a member of the governing body during the absence of the Admiral on his voyage to Cuba might be relied upon to counteract the jealous accusations of Margarite and Buil.

Unfortunately there was no golden cargo to send back with him. As much gold as possible was scraped together, but it was very little. The usual assortment of samples of various island products was also sent; but still the vessels were practically empty. Columbus must have been painfully conscious that the time for sending samples had more than expired, and that the people in Spain might reasonably expect some of the actual riches of which there had been so many specimens and promises. In something approaching desperation, he decided to fill the empty holds of the ships with something which, if it was not actual money, could at least be made to realise money. From their sunny dreaming life on the island

**MAP OF THE NORTHERN COAST OF ESPAÑOLA**  
*(Drawn by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS)*







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five hundred natives were taken and lodged in the dark holds of the caravels, to be sent to Spain and sold there for what they would fetch. Of course they were to be "freed" and converted to Christianity in the process; that was always part of the programme, but it did not interfere with business. They were not man-eating Caribs or fierce marauding savages from neighbouring islands, but were of the mild and peaceable race that peopled Española. The wheels of civilisation were beginning to turn in the New World.

After the capture of Caonabo and the massacre of April 25th Columbus marched through the island, receiving the surrender and submission of the terrified natives. At the approach of his force the caciques came out and sued for peace; and if here and there there was a momentary resistance, a charge of cavalry soon put an end to it. One by one the kings surrendered and laid down their arms, until all the island rulers had capitulated with the exception of Behechio, into whose territory Columbus did not march, and who sullenly retired to the south-western corner of the island. The terms of peace were harsh enough, and were suggested by the dilemma of Columbus in his frantic desire to get together some gold at any cost. A tribute of gold-dust was laid upon every adult native in the island. Every three months a hawk's bell full of gold was to be brought to the treasury at Isabella, and in the case



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of caciques the measure was a calabash. A receipt in the form of a brass medal was fastened to the neck of every Indian when he paid his tribute, and those who could not show the medal with the necessary number of marks were to be further fined and punished. In the districts where there was no gold, 25 lbs. of cotton was accepted instead.

This levy was made in ignorance of the real conditions under which the natives possessed themselves of the gold. What they had in many cases represented the store of years, and in all but one or two favoured districts it was quite impossible for them to keep up the amount of the tribute. Yet the hawks' bells, which once had been so eagerly coveted and were now becoming hated symbols of oppression, had to be filled somehow; and as the day of payment drew near the wretched natives, who had formerly only sought for gold when a little of it was wanted for a pretty ornament, had now to work with frantic energy in the river sands; or in other cases, to toil through the heat of the day in the cotton fields which they had formerly only cultivated enough to furnish their very scant requirements of use and adornment. One or two caciques, knowing that their people could not possibly furnish the required amount of gold, begged that its value in grain might be accepted instead; but that was not the kind of wealth that Columbus was seeking. It must be gold or nothing; and rather than receive any other article from the gold-bearing districts, he consented to take half the amount.





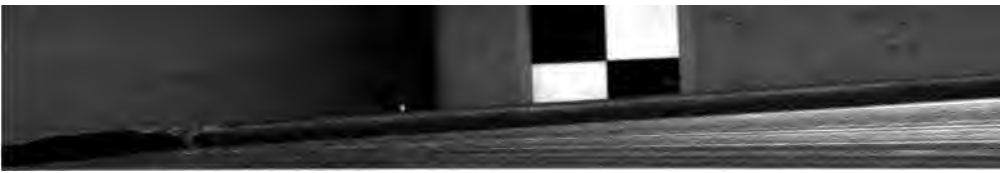
## CONQUEST OF ESPAÑOLA

Thus step by step, and under the banner of the Holy Catholic religion, did dark and cruel misery march through the groves and glades of the island and banish for ever its ancient peace. This long-vanished race that was native to the island of Española seems to have had some of the happiest and most lovable qualities known to dwellers on this planet. They had none of the brutalities of the African, the paralysing wisdom of the Asian, nor the tragic potentialities of the European peoples. Their life was from day to day, and from season to season, like the life of flowers and birds. They lived in such order and peaceable community as the common sense of their own simple needs suggested; they craved no pleasures except those that came free from nature, and sought no wealth but what the sun gave them. In their verdant island, near to the heart and source of light, surrounded by the murmur of the sea, and so enriched by nature that the idea of any other kind of riches never occurred to them, their existence went to a happy dancing measure like that of the fauns and nymphs in whose charmed existence they believed. The sun and moon were to them creatures of their island who had escaped from a cavern by the shore and now wandered free in the upper air, peopling it with happy stars; and man himself they believed to have sprung from crevices in the rocks, like the plants that grew tall and beautiful wherever there was a handful of soil for their roots. Poor happy children! You are all dead a long while ago now, and have long



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been hushed in the great humming sleep and silence of Time; the modern world has no time nor room for people like you, with so much kindness and so little ambition. . . . Yet their free pagan souls were given a chance to be penned within the Christian fold; the priest accompanied the gunner and the bloodhound, the missionary walked beside the slave-driver; and upon the bewildered sun-bright surface of their minds the shadow of the cross was for a moment thrown. Verily to them the professors of Christ brought not peace, but a sword.



## CHAPTER III

### UPS AND DOWNS

**W**HILE Columbus was toiling under the tropical sun to make good his promises to the Crown, Margarite and Buñ, having safely come home to Spain from across the seas, were busy setting forth their view of the value of his discoveries. It was a view entirely different from any that Ferdinand and Isabella had heard before, and coming as it did from two men of position and importance who had actually been in Española, and were loyal and religious subjects of the Crown, it could not fail to receive, if not immediate and complete credence, at any rate grave attention. Hitherto the Sovereigns had only heard one side of the matter; an occasional jealous voice may have been raised from the neighbourhood of the Pinzons or some one else not entirely satisfied with his own position in the affair; but such small cries of dissent had naturally had little chance against the dignified eloquence of the Admiral.

Now, however, the matter was different. People who were at least the equals of Columbus in intelligence, and his superiors by birth and education, had seen with their own eyes the things of which he had spoken, and their account differed widely from his. They represented things in

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Española as being in a very bad way indeed, which was true enough; drew a dismal picture of an overcrowded colony ravaged with disease and suffering from lack of provisions; and held forth at length upon the very doubtful quality of the gold with which the New World was supposed to abound. More than this, they brought grave charges against Columbus himself, representing him as unfit to govern a colony, given to favouritism, and, worst of all, guilty of having deliberately misrepresented for his own ends the resources of the colony. This as we know was not true. It was not for his own ends, or for any ends at all within the comprehension of men like Margarite and Butl, that poor Christopher had spoken so glowingly out of a heart full of faith in what he had seen and done. Purposes, dim perhaps, but far greater and loftier than any of which these two mean souls had understanding, animated him alike in his discoveries and in his account of them; although that does not alter the unpleasant fact that at the stage matters had now reached it seemed as though there might have been serious misrepresentation.

Ferdinand and Isabella, thus confronted with a rather difficult situation, acted with great wisdom and good sense. How much or how little they believed we do not know, but it was obviously their duty, having heard such an account from responsible officers, to investigate matters for themselves without assuming either that the report was true or untrue. They immediately had four caravels furnished with supplies, and decided to appoint an agent to accompany the expedition, investigate the affairs of the

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colony, and make a report to them. If the Admiral was still absent when their agent reached the colony he was to be entrusted with the distribution of the supplies which were being sent out; for Columbus's long absence from Española had given rise to some fears for his safety.

The Sovereigns had just come to this decision (April 1495) when a letter arrived from the Admiral himself, announcing his return to Española after discovering the veritable mainland of Asia, as the notarial document enclosed with the letter attested. Torres and James Columbus had arrived in Spain, bearing the memorandum which some time ago we saw the Admiral writing; and they were able to do something towards allaying the fears of the Sovereigns as to the condition of the colony. The King and Queen, nevertheless, wisely decided to carry out their original intention, and in appointing an agent they very handsomely chose one of the men whom Columbus had recommended to them in his letter—Juan Aguado. This action shows a friendliness to Columbus and confidence in him that lead one to suspect that the tales of Margarite and Buñ had been taken with a grain of salt.

At the same time the Sovereigns made one or two orders which could not but be unwelcome to Columbus. A decree was issued making it lawful for all native-born Spaniards to make voyages of discovery, and to settle in Española itself if they liked. This was an infringement of the original privileges granted to the Admiral—privileges which were really absurd, and which can only have been granted in complete disbelief that anything much



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would come of his discovery. It took Columbus two years to get this order modified, and in the meantime a great many Spanish adventurers, our old friends the Pinzons among them, did actually make voyages and added to the area explored by the Spaniards in Columbus's lifetime. Columbus was bitterly jealous that any one should be admitted to the western ocean, which he regarded as his special preserve, except under his supreme authority; and he is reported to have said that once the way to the West had been pointed out "even the very tailors turned explorers." There, surely, spoke the long dormant wool-weaver in him.

The commission given to Aguado was very brief, and so vaguely worded that it might mean much or little, according to the discretion of the commissioner and the necessities of the case as viewed by him. "We send to you Juan Aguada, our Groom of the Chambers, who will speak to you on our part. We command you to give him faith and credit." A letter was also sent to Columbus in which he was instructed to reduce the number of people dependent on the colony to five hundred instead of a thousand; and the control of the mines was entrusted to one Pablo Belvis, who was sent out as chief metallurgist. As for the slaves that Columbus had sent home, Isabella forbade their sale until inquiry could be made into the condition of their capture, and the fine moral point involved was entrusted to the ecclesiastical authorities for examination and solution. Poor Christopher, knowing as he did that five hundred heretics were being burned every year by

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the Grand Inquisitor, had not expected this hair-splitting over the fate of heathens who had rebelled against Spanish authority; and it caused him some distress when he heard of it. The theologians, however, proved equal to the occasion, and the slaves were duly sold in Seville market.

Aguado sailed from Cadiz at the end of August 1495, and reached Española in October. James Columbus (who does not as yet seem to be in very great demand anywhere, and who doubtless conceals behind his grave visage much honest amazement at the amount of life that he is seeing) returned with him. Aguado, on arriving at Isabella, found that Columbus was absent establishing forts in the interior of the island, Bartholomew being left in charge at Isabella. Aguado, who had apparently been found faithful in small matters, was found wanting in his use of the authority that had been entrusted to him. It seems to have turned his head; for instead of beginning quietly to investigate the affairs of the colony as he had been commanded to do he took over from Bartholomew the actual government, and interpreted his commission as giving him the right to supersede the Admiral himself. The unhappy colony, which had no doubt been enjoying some brief period of peace under the wise direction of Bartholomew, was again thrown into confusion by the doings of Aguado. He arrested this person, imprisoned that; ordered that things should be done this way, which had formerly been done that way; and if they had formerly been done that



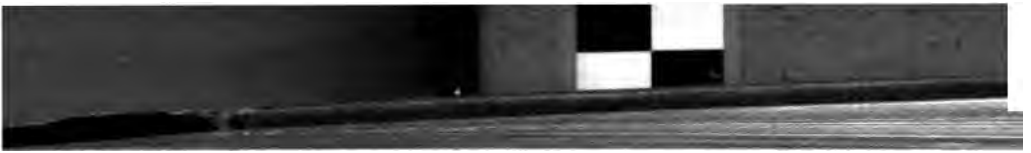


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way, then he ordered that they should be done this way—in short he committed every mistake possible for a man in his situation armed with a little brief authority. He did not hesitate to let it be known that he was there to examine the conduct of the Admiral himself; and we may be quite sure that every one in the colony who had a grievance or an ill tale to carry, carried it to Aguado. His whole attitude was one of enmity and disloyalty to the Admiral who had so handsomely recommended him to the notice of the Sovereigns; and so undisguised was his attitude that even the Indians began to lodge their complaints and to see a chance by which they might escape from the intolerable burden of the gold tribute.

It was at this point that Columbus returned and found Aguado ruling in the place of Bartholomew, who had wisely made no protest against his own deposition, but was quietly waiting for the Admiral to return. Columbus might surely have been forgiven if he had betrayed extreme anger and annoyance at the doings of Aguado; and it is entirely to his credit that he concealed such natural wrath as he may have felt, and greeted Aguado with extreme courtesy and ceremony as a representative of the Sovereigns. He made no protest, but decided to return himself to Spain and confront the jealousy and ill-fame that were accumulating against him.

Just as the ships were all ready to sail, one of the hurricanes which occur periodically in the West Indies burst upon the island, lashing the sea into a wall of advancing foam that destroyed everything before it. Among other things it destroyed three out of the four ships, dashing them on



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the beach and reducing them to complete wreckage. The only one that held to her anchor and, although much battered and damaged, rode out the gale, was the *Niña*, that staunch little friend that had remained faithful to the Admiral through so many dangers and trials. There was nothing for it but to build a new ship out of the fragments of the wrecks, and to make the journey home with two ships instead of with four.

At this moment, while he was waiting for the ship to be completed, Columbus heard a piece of news of a kind that never failed to rouse his interest. There was a young Spaniard named Miguel Diaz who had got into disgrace in Isabella some time before on account of a duel, and had wandered into the island until he had come out on the south coast at the mouth of the river Ozama, near the site of the present town of Santo Domingo. There he had fallen in love with a female cacique and had made his home with her. She, knowing the Spanish taste, and anxious to please her lover and to retain him in her territory, told him of some rich gold-mines that there were in the neighbourhood, and suggested that he should inform the Admiral, who would perhaps remove the settlement from Isabella to the south coast. She provided him with guides and sent him off to Isabella, where, hearing that his antagonist had recovered, and that he himself was therefore in no danger of punishment, he presented himself with his story.



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Columbus immediately despatched Bartholomew with a party to examine the mines; and sure enough they found in the river Hayna undoubted evidence of a wealth far in excess of that contained in the Cibao gold-mines. Moreover, they had noticed two ancient excavations about which the natives could tell them nothing, but which made them think that the mines had once been worked.

Columbus was never backward in fitting a story and a theory to whatever phenomena surrounded him; and in this case he was certain that the excavations were the work of Solomon, and that he had discovered the gold of Ophir. "Sure enough," thinks the Admiral, "I have hit it this time; and the ships came eastward from the Persian Gulf round the Golden Chersonesus, which I discovered this very last winter." Immediately, as his habit was, Columbus began to build castles in Spain. Here was a fine answer to Buñ and Margarite! Without waiting a week or two to get any of the gold this extraordinary man decided to hurry off at once to Spain with the news, not dreaming that Spain might, by this time, have had a surfeit of news, and might be in serious need of some simple, honest facts. But he thought his two caravels sufficiently freighted with this new belief—the belief that he had discovered the Ophir of Solomon.

The Admiral sailed on March 10th, 1496, carrying with him in chains the vanquished Caonabo and other natives. He touched at Marigalante and at Guadaloupe,

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where his people had an engagement with the natives, taking several prisoners, but releasing them all again with the exception of one woman, a handsome creature who had fallen in love with Caonabo and refused to go. But for Caonabo the joys of life and love were at an end; his heart and spirit were broken. He was not destined to be paraded as a captive through the streets of Spain, and it was somewhere in the deep Atlantic that he paid the last tribute to the power that had captured and broken him. He died on the voyage, which was longer and much more full of hardships than usual. For some reason or other Columbus did not take the northerly route going home, but sailed east from Gaudaloupe, encountering the easterly trade winds, which delayed him so much that the voyage occupied three months instead of six weeks.

Once more he exhibited his easy mastery of the art of navigation and his extraordinary gift for estimating dead-reckoning. After having been out of sight of land for eight weeks, and while some of the sailors thought they might be in the Bay of Biscay, and others that they were in the English Channel, the Admiral suddenly announced that they were close to Cape Saint Vincent. No land was in sight, but he ordered that sail should be shortened that evening; and sure enough the next morning they sighted the land close by Cape Saint Vincent. Columbus managed his landfalls with a fine dramatic sense as though they were conjuring tricks; and indeed they must have seemed like conjuring tricks, except that they were almost always successful.



## CHAPTER IV

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**T**HE loiterers about the harbour of Cadiz saw a curious sight on June 11th, 1496, when the two battered ships, bearing back the voyagers from the Eldorado of the West, disembarked their passengers. There were some 220 souls on board, including thirty Indians: and instead of leaping ashore, flushed with health, and bringing the fortunes which they had gone out to seek, they crawled miserably from the boats or were carried ashore, emaciated by starvation, yellow with disease, ragged and unkempt from poverty, and with practically no possessions other than the clothes they stood up in. Even the Admiral, now in his forty-sixth year, hardly had the appearance that one would expect in a Viceroy of the Indies. His white hair and beard were rough and matted, his handsome face furrowed by care and sunken by illness and exhaustion, and instead of the glittering armour and uniform of his office he wore the plain robe and girdle of the Franciscan order—this last probably in consequence of some vow or other he had made in an hour of peril on the voyage.

One lucky coincidence marked his arrival. In the



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harbour, preparing to weigh anchor, was a fleet of three little caravels, commanded by Pedro Niño, about to set out for Española with supplies and despatches. Columbus hurried on board Niño's ship, and there read the letters from the Sovereigns which it had been designed he should receive in Española. The letters are not preserved, but one can make a fair guess at their contents. Some searching questions would certainly be asked, kind assurances of continued confidence would doubtless be given, with many suggestions for the betterment of affairs in the distant colony. Only their result upon the Admiral is known to us. He sat down there and then and wrote to Bartholomew, urging him to secure peace in the island by every means in his power, to send home any caciques or natives who were likely to give trouble, and most of all to push on with the building of a settlement on the south coast where the new mines were, and to have a cargo of gold ready to send back with the next expedition. Having written this letter, the Admiral saw the little fleet sail away on June 17th, and himself prepared with mingled feelings to present himself before his Sovereigns.

While he was waiting for their summons at Los Palacios, a small town near Seville, he was the guest of the curate of that place, Andrez Bernaldez, who had been chaplain to Christopher's old friend Deza, the Archbishop of Seville. This good priest evidently proved a staunch friend to Columbus at this anxious period of his life, for the Admiral left many important papers in his charge when he again left Spain, and no small part of



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the scant contemporary information about Columbus that has come down to us is contained in the *Historia de los Reyes Catolicos*, which Bernaldez wrote after the death of Columbus.

Fickle Spain had already forgotten its first sentimental enthusiasm over the Admiral's discoveries, and now was only interested in their financial results. People cannot be continually excited about a thing which they have not seen, and there were events much nearer home that absorbed the public interest. There was the trouble with France, the contemplated alliance of the Crown Prince with Margaret of Austria, and of the Spanish Princess Juana with Philip of Austria; and there were the designs of Ferdinand upon the kingdom of Naples, which was in his eyes a much more desirable and valuable prize than any group of unknown islands beyond the ocean.

Columbus did his very best to work up enthusiasm again. He repeated the performance that had been such a success after his first voyage—the kind of circus procession in which the natives were marched in column surrounded by specimens of the wealth of the Indies. But somehow it did not work so well this time. Where there had formerly been acclamations and crowds pressing forward to view the savages and their ornaments, there were now apathy and a dearth of spectators. And although Columbus did his very best, and was careful to exhibit every scrap of gold that he had brought, and to hang golden



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collars and ornaments about the necks of the marching Indians, his exhibition was received either in ominous silence or, in some quarters, with something like derision. As I have said before, there comes a time when the best-disposed debtors do not regard themselves as being repaid by promises, and when the most enthusiastic optimist desires to see something more than samples. It was only old Colon going round with his show again—flamingoes, macaws, sea-shells, dye-woods, gums and spices; some people laughed, and some were angry; but all were united in thinking that the New World was not a very profitable speculation.

Things were a little better, however, at Court. Isabella certainly believed still in Columbus; Ferdinand, although he had never been enthusiastic, knew the Admiral too well to make the vulgar mistake of believing him an impostor; and both were too polite and considerate to add to his obvious mortification and distress by any discouraging comments. Moreover, the man himself had lost neither his belief in the value of his discoveries nor his eloquence in talking of them; and when he told his story to the Sovereigns they could not help being impressed, not only with his sincerity but with his ability and single-heartedness also. It was almost the same old story, of illimitable wealth that was just about to be acquired, and perhaps no one but Columbus could have made it go down once more with success; but talking about his exploits was never any trouble to him, and his astonishing conviction, the lofty and dignified manner





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in which he described both good and bad fortune, and the impressive way in which he spoke of the wealth of the gold of Ophir and of the far-reaching importance of his supposed discovery of the Golden Chersonesus and the mainland of Asia, had their due effect on his hearers.

It was always his way, plausible Christopher, to pass lightly over the premises and to dwell with elaborate detail on the deductions. It was by no means proved that he had discovered the mines of King Solomon; he had never even seen the place which he identified with them; it was in fact nothing more than an idea in his own head; but we may be sure that he took it as an established fact that he had actually discovered the mines of Ophir, and confined his discussion to estimates of the wealth which they were likely to yield, and of what was to be done with the wealth when the mere details of conveying it from the mines to the ships had been disposed of. So also with the Golden Chersonesus. The very name was enough to stop the mouths of doubters; and here was the man himself who had actually been there, and here was a sworn affidavit from every member of his crew to say that they had been there too. This kind of logic is irresistible if you only grant the first little step; and Columbus had the art of making it seem an act of imbecility in any of his hearers to doubt the strength of the little link by which his great golden chains of argument were fastened to fact and truth.

For Columbus everything depended upon his reception by the Sovereigns at this time. Unless he could re-establish



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his hold upon them and move to a still more secure position in their confidence he was a ruined man and his career was finished ; and one cannot but sympathise with him as he sits there searching his mind for tempting and convincing arguments, and speaking so calmly and gravely and confidently in spite of all the doubts and flutterings in his heart. Like a tradesman setting out his wares, he brought forth every inducement he could think of to convince the Sovereigns that the only way to make a success of what they had already done was to do more ; that the only way to make profitable the money that had already been spent was to spend more ; that the only way to prove the wisdom of their trust in him was to trust him more. One of his transcendent merits in a situation of this kind was that he always had something new and interesting to propose. He did not spread out his hands and say, "This is what I have done : it is the best I can do ; how are you going to treat me ?" He said in effect, "This is what I have done ; you will see that it will all come right in time ; do not worry about it ; but meanwhile I have something else to propose which I think your Majesties will consider a good plan."

His new demand was for a fleet of six ships, two of which were to convey supplies to Española, and the other four to be entrusted to him for the purpose of a voyage of discovery towards the mainland to the south of Española, of which he had heard consistent rumours ; which was said to be rich in gold, and (a clever touch) to which the King of Portugal was thinking of sending



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a fleet, as he thought that it might lie within the limits of his domain of heathendom. And so well did he manage, and so deeply did he impress the Sovereigns with his assurance that this time the thing amounted to what is vulgarly called "a dead certainty," that they promised him he should have his ships.

But promise and performance, as no one knew better than Columbus, are different things; and it was a long while before he got his ships. There was the usual scarcity of money, and the extensive military and diplomatic operations in which the Crown was then engaged absorbed every maravedi that Ferdinand could lay his hands on. There was an army to be maintained under the Pyrenees to keep watch over France; fleets had to be kept patrolling both the Mediterranean and Atlantic seaboards; and there was a whole armada required to convey the princesses of Spain and Austria to their respective husbands in connection with the double matrimonial alliance arranged between the two countries. And when at last, in October 1496, six million maravedis were provided wherewith Columbus might equip his fleet, they were withdrawn again under very mortifying circumstances. The appropriation had just been made when a letter arrived from Pedro Niño, who had been to Española and come back again, and now wrote from Cadiz to the Sovereigns, saying that his ships were full of gold. He did not present himself at Court, but went



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to visit his family at Huelva ; but the good news of his letter was accepted as an excuse for this oversight.

No one was better pleased than the Admiral. "What did I tell you?" he says; "you see the mines of Hayna are paying already." King Ferdinand, equally pleased, and having an urgent need of money in connection with his operations against France, took the opportunity to cancel the appropriation of the six million maravedis, giving Columbus instead an order for the amount to be paid out of the treasure brought home by Niño. Alas, the mariner's boast of gold had been a figure of speech. There was no gold; there was only a cargo of slaves, which Niño deemed the equivalent of gold; and when Bartholomew's despatches came to be read he described the affairs of Española as being in very much the same condition as before. This incident produced a most unfortunate impression. Even Columbus was obliged to keep quiet for a little while; and it is likely that the mention of six million maravedis was not welcomed by him for some time afterwards.

After the wedding of Prince Juan in March 1497, when Queen Isabella had more time to give to external affairs, the promise to Columbus was again remembered, and his position was considered in detail. An order was made (April 23rd, 1497), restoring to the Admiral the original privileges bestowed upon him at Santa Fé. He was offered a large tract of land in Española, with the title of Duke; but much as he hankered after titular honours, he was for once prudent enough to refuse this

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gift. His reason was that it would only further damage his influence, and give apparent justification to those enemies who said that the whole enterprise had been undertaken merely in his own interests; and it is possible also that his many painful associations with Española, and the bloodshed and horrors that he had witnessed there, had aroused in his superstitious mind a distaste for possessions and titles in that devastated Paradise. Instead, he accepted a measure of relief from the obligations incurred by his eighth share in the many unprofitable expeditions that had been sent out during the last three years, agreeing for the next three years to receive an eighth share of the gross income, and a tenth of the net profits, without contributing anything to the cost. His appointment of Bartholomew to the office of Adelantado, which had annoyed Ferdinand, was now confirmed; the universal license which had been granted to Spanish subjects to settle in the new lands was revoked in so far as it infringed the Admiral's privileges; and he was granted a force of 330 officers, soldiers, and artificers to be at his personal disposal in the prosecution of his next voyage.

The death of Prince Juan in October 1497 once more distracted the attention of the Court from all but personal matters; and Columbus employed the time of waiting in drafting a testamentary document<sup>1</sup> in which he was permitted to create an entail on his title and estates in favour of his two sons and their heirs for ever. This

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix G.



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did not represent his complete or final testament, for he added codicils at various times, the latest being executed the day before his death. The document is worth studying; it reveals something of the laborious, painstaking mind reaching out down the rivers and streams of the future that were to flow from the fountain of his own greatness; it reveals also his triple conception of the obligations of human life in this world—the cultivation and retention of temporal dignity, the performance of pious and charitable acts, and the recognition of duty to one's family. It was in this document that Columbus formulated the curious cipher which he always now used in signing his name, and of which various readings are given in the Appendix.<sup>1</sup> He also enjoined upon his heir the duty of using the simple title which he himself loved and used most—"The Admiral."

After the death of Prince Juan, Queen Isabella honoured Columbus by attaching his two sons to her own person as pages; and her friendship must at this time have gone far to compensate him for the coolness shown towards him by the public at large. He might talk as much as he pleased, but he had nothing to show for all his talk except a few trinkets, a collection of interesting but valueless botanical specimens, and a handful of miserable slaves. Lives and fortunes had been wrecked on the enterprise, which had so far brought nothing to Spain

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D.



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but the promise of luxurious adventure that was not fulfilled and of a wealth and glory that had not been realised. It must have been a very humiliating circumstance to Columbus that in the preparations which he was now (February 1498) making for the equipment of his new expedition a great difficulty was found in procuring ships and men. Not even before the first voyage had so much reluctance been shown to risk life and property in the enterprise. Merchants and sailors had then been frightened of dangers which they did not know; now, it seemed, the evils of which they did know proved a still greater deterrent. The Admiral was at this time the guest of his friend Bernaldez, who has told us something of his difficulties; and the humiliating expedient of seizing ships under a royal order had finally to be adopted. But it would never have done to impress the colonists also; that would have been too open a confession of failure for the proud Admiral to tolerate.

Instead he had recourse to the miserable plan of which he had made use in Palos; the prisons were opened, and criminals under sentence invited to come forth and enjoy the blessings of colonial life. Even then there was not that rush from the prison doors that might have been expected, and some desperate characters apparently preferred the mercies of a Spanish prison to what they had heard of the joys of the Earthly Paradise. Still a number of criminals did doubtfully crawl forth and furnish a retinue for the great Admiral and Viceroy. Trembling, suspicious, and with more than half a mind to



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go back to their bonds, some part of the human vermin of Spain was eventually cajoled and chivied on board the ships.

The needs of the colony being urgent, and recruiting being slow, two caravels laden with provisions were sent off in advance; but even for this purpose there was a difficulty about money, and good Isabella furnished the expense, at much inconvenience, from her private purse. Columbus had to supervise everything himself; and no wonder that by the end of May, when he was ready to sail, his patience and temper were exhausted and his much-tried endurance broke down under the petty gnat-like irritations of Fonseca and his myrmidons. It was on the deck of his own ship, in the harbour of San Lucar, that he knocked down and soundly kicked Ximeno de Breviesca, Fonseca's accountant, whose nagging requisitions had driven the Admiral to fury.

After all these years of gravity and restraint and endurance, this momentary outbreak of the old Adam in our hero is like a breath of wind through an open window. To the portraits of Columbus hanging in the gallery of one's imagination this must surely be added; in which Christopher, on the deck of his ship, with the royal standard and the Admiral's flag flying from his masthead, is observed to be soundly kicking a prostrate accountant. The incident is worthy of a date, which is accordingly here given, as near as may be—May 29, 1498.





## CHAPTER V

### THE THIRD VOYAGE

**C**OLUMBUS was at sea again; firm ground to him, although so treacherous and unstable to most of us; and as he saw the Spanish coast sinking down on the horizon he could shake himself free from his troubles, and feel that once more he was in a situation of which he was master. He first touched at Porto Santo, where, if the story of his residence there be true, there must have been potent memories for him in the sight of the long white beach and the plantations, with the Governor's house beyond. He stayed there only a few hours and then crossed over to Madeira, anchoring in the Bay of Funchal, where he took in wood and water. As it was really unnecessary for him to make a port so soon after leaving, there was probably some other reason for his visit to these islands; perhaps a family reason; perhaps nothing more historically important than the desire to look once more on scenes of bygone happiness, for even on the page of history every event is not necessarily big with significance. From Madeira he took a southerly course to the Canary Islands, and on June 16th anchored at Gomera, where he found a French warship with two Spanish prizes,



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all of which put to sea as the Admiral's fleet approached. On June 21st, when he sailed from Gomera, he divided his fleet of six vessels into two squadrons. Three ships were despatched direct to Española, for the supplies which they carried were urgently needed there. These three ships were commanded by trustworthy men: Pedro de Arana, a brother of Beatriz, Alonso Sanchez de Carvajal, and Juan Antonio Colombo—this last no other than a cousin of Christopher's from Genoa. The sons of Domenico's provident younger brother had not prospered, while the sons of improvident Domenico were now all in high places; and these three poor cousins, hearing of Christopher's greatness, and deciding that use should be made of him, scraped together enough money to send one of their number to Spain. The Admiral always had a sound family feeling, and finding that cousin Antonio had sea experience and knew how to handle a ship he gave him command of one of the caravels on this voyage—a command of which he proved capable and worthy. From these three captains, after giving them full sailing directions for reaching Española, Columbus parted company off the island of Ferro. He himself stood on a southerly course towards the Cape Verde Islands.

His plan on this voyage was to find the mainland to the southward, of which he had heard rumours in Española. Before leaving Spain he had received a letter from an eminent lapidary named Ferrer who had travelled much in the east, and who assured him that if he sought



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gold and precious stones he must go to hot lands, and that the hotter the lands were, and the blacker the inhabitants, the more likely he was to find riches there. This was just the kind of theory to suit Columbus, and as he sailed towards the Cape Verde Islands he was already in imagination gathering gold and pearls on the shores of the equatorial continent.

He stayed for about a week at the Cape Verde Islands, getting in provisions and cattle, and curiously observing the life of the Portuguese lepers who came in numbers to the island of Buenavista to be cured there by eating the flesh and bathing in the blood of turtles. It was not an inspiring week which he spent in that dreary place and enervating climate, with nothing to see but the goats feeding among the scrub, the turtles crawling about the sand, and the lepers following the turtles. It began to tell on the health of the crew, so he weighed anchor on July 5th and stood on a south-westerly course.

This third voyage, which was destined to be the most important of all, and the material for which had cost him so much time and labour, was undertaken in a very solemn and determined spirit. His health, which he had hoped to recover in Spain, had been if anything damaged by his worryings with officialdom there; and although he was only forty-seven years of age he was in some respects already an old man. He had entered, although happily he did not know it, on the last decade of his life; and was already beginning to suffer from the two



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diseases, gout and ophthalmia, which were soon to undermine his strength and endurance. Religion of a mystical fifteenth-century sort was deepening in him; he had undertaken this voyage in the name of the Holy Trinity; and to that theological entity he had resolved to dedicate the first new land that he should sight.

For ten days light baffling winds impeded his progress; but at the end of that time the winds fell away altogether, and the voyagers found themselves in that flat equatorial calm known to mariners as the Doldrums. The vertical rays of the sun shone blisteringly down upon them, making the seams of the ships gape and causing the unhappy crews mental as well as bodily distress, for they began to fear that they had reached that zone of fire which had always been said to exist in the southern ocean. Day after day the three ships lay motionless on the glassy water, with wood-work so hot as to burn the hands that touched it, with the meat putrefying in the casks below, and the water running from the loosened casks, and no one with courage and endurance enough to venture into the stifling hold even to save the provisions. And through all this the Admiral, racked with gout, had to keep a cheerful face and assure his prostrate crew that they would soon be out of it.

There were showers of rain sometimes, but the moisture in that baking atmosphere only added to its stifling and enervating effects. All the while, however, the great slow current of the Atlantic was moving westward, and there came a day when a heavenly breeze stirred in the



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torrid air and the musical talk of ripples began to rise again from the weedy stems of the ships. They sailed due west, always into a cooler and fresher atmosphere; but still no land was sighted, although pelicans and smaller birds were continually seen passing from south-west to north-east. As provisions were beginning to run low, Columbus decided on the 31st July to alter his course to north-by-east, in the hope of reaching the island of Dominica. But at mid-day his servant Alonso Perez, happening to go to the masthead, cried out that there was land in sight; and sure enough to the westward there rose three peaks of land united at the base. Here was the kind of coincidence which staggers even the unbeliever. Columbus had promised to dedicate the first land he saw to the Trinity; and here was the land, miraculously provided when he needed it most, three peaks in one peak, in due conformity with the requirements of the blessed Saint Athanasius. The Admiral was deeply affected; the God of his belief was indeed a good friend to him; and he wrote down his pious conviction that the event was a miracle, and summoned all hands to sing the *Salve Regina*, with other hymns in praise of God and the Virgin Mary. The island was duly christened La Trinidad. By the hour of Compline (9 o'clock in the evening) they had come up with the south coast of the island, but it was the next day before the Admiral found a harbour where he could take in water. No natives were to be seen, although there were footprints on the shore and other signs of human habitation.



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He continued all day to sail slowly along the shore of the island, the green luxuriance of which astonished him; and sometimes he stood out from the coast to the southward as he made a long board to round this or that point. It must have been while reaching out in this way to the southward that he saw a low shore on his port hand some sixty miles to the south of Trinidad, and that his sight, although he did not know it, rested for the first time on the mainland of South America. The land seen was the low coast to the west of the Orinoco, and thinking that it was an island he gave it the name of *Isla Sancta*.

On the 2nd of August they were off the south-west of Trinidad, and saw the first inhabitants in the shape of a canoe full of armed natives, who approached the ships with threatening gestures. Columbus had brought out some musicians with him, possibly for the purpose of impressing the natives, and perhaps with the idea of making things a little more cheerful in *Española*; and the musicians were now duly called upon to give a performance, a tambourine-player standing on the forecastle and beating the rhythm for the ships' boys to dance to. The effect was other than was anticipated, for the natives immediately discharged a thick flight of arrows at the musicians, and the music and dancing abruptly ceased. Eventually the Indians were prevailed upon to come on board the two smaller ships and to receive gifts, after which they departed and were seen no more. Columbus landed and made some observations of the vegetation and



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climate of Trinidad, noticing that the fruits and trees were similar to those of Española, and that oysters abounded, as well as "very large, infinite fish, and parrots as large as hens."

He saw another peak of the mainland to the northwest, which was the peninsula of Paria, and to which Columbus, taking it to be another island, gave the name of Isla de Gracia. Between him and this land lay a narrow channel through which a mighty current was flowing—that press of waters which, sweeping across the Atlantic from Africa, enters the Caribbean Sea, sprays round the Gulf of Mexico, and turns north again in the current known as the Gulf Stream. While his ships were anchored at the entrance to this channel and Columbus was wondering how he should cross it, a mighty flood of water suddenly came down with a roar, sending a great surging wave in front of it. The vessels were lifted up as though by magic; two of them dragged their anchors from the bottom, and the other one broke her cable. This flood was probably caused by a sudden flush of fresh water from one of the many mouths of the Orinoco; but to Columbus, who had no thought of rivers in his mind, it was very alarming. Apparently, however, there was nothing for it but to get through the channel, and having sent boats on in front to take soundings and see that there was clear water he eventually piloted his little squadron through, with his heart in his mouth and his eyes fixed on the swinging eddies and surging circles of the channel. Once beyond it he was in the smooth water of the Gulf



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of Paria. He followed the westerly coast of Trinidad to the north until he came to a second channel narrower than the first, through which the current boiled with still greater violence, and to which he gave the name of Dragon's Mouth. This is the channel between the north-westerly point of Trinidad and the eastern promontory of Paria. Columbus now began to be bewildered, for he discovered that the water over the ship's side was fresh water, and he could not make out where it came from. Thinking that the peninsula of Paria was an island, and not wishing to attempt the dangerous passage of the Dragon's Mouth, he decided to coast along the southern shore of the land opposite, hoping to be able to turn north round its western extremity.

Sweeter blew the breezes, fresher grew the water, milder and more balmy the air, greener and deeper the vegetation of this beautiful region. The Admiral was ill with the gout, and suffering such pain from his eyes that he was sometimes blinded by it; but the excitement of the strange phenomena surrounding him kept him up, and his powers of observation, always acute, suffered no diminution. There were no inhabitants to be seen as they sailed along the coast, but monkeys climbed and chattered in the trees by the shore, and oysters were found clinging to the branches that dipped into the water. At last, in a bay where they anchored to take in water, a native canoe containing three men was seen





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cautiously approaching ; and the men, who were shy, were captured by the device of a sailor jumping on to the gunwale of the canoe and overturning it, the natives being easily caught in the water, and afterwards soothed and captivated by the unfailing attraction of hawks' bells. They were tall men with long hair, and they told Columbus that the name of their country was Paria ; and when they were asked about other inhabitants they pointed to the west and signified that there was a great population in that direction.

On the 10th of August 1498 a party landed on this coast and formally took possession of it in the name of the Sovereigns of Spain. By an unlucky chance Columbus himself did not land. His eyes were troubling him so much that he was obliged to lie down in his cabin, and the formal act of possession was performed by a deputy. If he had only known ! If he could but have guessed that this was indeed the mainland of a New World that did not exist even in his dreams, what agonies he would have suffered rather than permit any one else to pronounce the words of annexation ! But he lay there in pain and suffering, his curious mystical mind occupied with a conception very remote indeed from the truth.

For in that fertile hotbed of imagination, the Admiral's brain, a new and staggering theory had gradually been taking shape. As his ships had been wafted into this delicious region, as the airs had become sweeter, the vegetation



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more luxuriant, and the water of the sea fresher, he had solemnly arrived at the conclusion that he was approaching the region of the true terrestrial Paradise: the Garden of Eden that some of the Fathers had declared to be situated in the extreme east of the Old World, and in a region so high that the flood had not overwhelmed it. Columbus, thinking hard in his cabin, blood and brain a little fevered, comes to the conclusion that the world is not round but pear-shaped. He knows that all this fresh water in the sea must come from a great distance and from no ordinary river; and he decides that its volume and direction have been acquired in its fall from the apex of the pear, from the very top of the world, from the Garden of Eden itself. It was a most beautiful conception; a theory worthy to be fitted to all the sweet sights and sounds in the world about him; but it led him farther and farther away from the truth, and blinded him to knowledge and understanding of what he had actually accomplished.

He had thought the coast of Cuba the mainland, and he now began to consider it at least possible that the peninsula of Paria was mainland also—another part of the same continent. That was the truth—Paria was the mainland—and if he had not been so bemused by his dreams and theories he might have had some inkling of the real wonder and significance of his discovery. But no; in his profoundly unscientific mind there was little of that patience which holds men back from theorising and keeps them ready to receive the truth. He was



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patient enough in doing, but in thinking he was not patient at all. No sooner had he observed a fact than he must find a theory which would bring it into relation with the whole of his knowledge; and if the facts would not harmonise of themselves he invented a scheme of things by which they were forced into harmony. He was indeed a Darwinian before his time, an adept in the art of inventing causes to fit facts, and then proving that the facts sprang from the causes; but his origins were tangible, immovable things of rock and soil that could be seen and visited by other men, and their true relation to the terrestrial phenomena accurately established; so that his very proofs were monumental, and became themselves the advertisements of his profound misjudgment. But meanwhile he is the Admiral of the Ocean Seas, and can "make it so"; and accordingly, in a state of mental instability, he makes the Gulf of Paria to be a slope of earth immediately below the Garden of Eden, although fortunately he does not this time provide a sworn affidavit of trembling ships' boys to confirm his discovery.

Meanwhile also here were pearls; the native women wore ropes of them all over their bodies, and a fair store of them were bartered for pieces of broken crockery. Asked as usual about the pearls the natives, also as usual, pointed vaguely to the west and south-west, and explained that there were more pearls in that direction. But the Admiral would not tarry. Although he believed that he was within reach of Eden and pearls, he was more anxious to get back to Española and send the thrilling



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news to Spain than he was to push on a little farther and really assure himself of the truth. How like Christopher that was! Ideas to him were of more value than facts, as indeed they are to the world at large; but one is sometimes led to wonder whether he did not sometimes hesitate to turn his ideas into facts for very fear that they should turn out to be only ideas. Was he, in his relations with Spain and the world, a trader in the names rather than the substance of things? We have seen him going home to Spain and announcing the discovery of the Golden Chersonesus, although he had only discovered what he erroneously supposed to be an indication of it; proclaiming the discovery of the Ophir of Solomon without taking the trouble to test for himself so tremendous an assumption; and we now see him hurrying away to dazzle Spain with the story that he has discovered the Garden of Eden, without even trying to push on for a few days more to secure so much as a cutting from the Tree of Life.

These are grave considerations; for although happily the Tree of Life is now of no importance to any human being, the doings of Admiral Christopher were of great importance to himself and to his fellow-men at that time, and are still to-day, through the infinite channels in which human thought and action run and continue throughout the world, of grave importance to us. Perhaps this is not quite the moment, now that the poor Admiral is lying in pain and weakness and not quite master of his own mind, to consider fully how he stands in this

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matter of honesty; we will leave it for the present until he is well again, or better still, until his tale of life and action is complete, and comes as a whole before the bar of human judgment.

On August 11th Columbus turned east again after having given up the attempt to find a passage to the north round Paria. There were practical considerations that brought him to this action. As the water was growing shoaler and shoaler he had sent a caravel of light draft some way further to the westward, and she reported that there lay ahead of her a great inner bay or gulf consisting of almost entirely fresh water. Provisions, moreover, were running short, and were, as usual, turning bad; the Admiral's health made vigorous action of any kind impossible for him; he was anxious about the condition of Española—anxious also, as we have seen, to send this great news home; and he therefore turned back and decided to risk the passage of the Dragon's Mouth. He anchored in the neighbouring harbour until the wind was in the right quarter, and with some trepidation put his ships into the boiling tideway. When they were in the middle of the passage the wind fell to a dead calm, and the ships, with their sails hanging loose, were borne on the dizzy surface of eddies, overfalls, and whirls of the tide. Fortunately there was deep water in the passage, and the strength of the current carried them safely through. Once outside they bore

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away to the northward, sighting the islands of Tobago and Grenada and, turning westward again, came to the islands of Cubagua and Margarita, where three pounds of pearls were bartered from the natives. A week after the passage of the Dragon's Mouth Columbus sighted the south coast of Española, which coast he made at a point a long way to the east of the new settlement that he had instructed Bartholomew to found; and as the winds were contrary, and he feared it might take him a long time to beat up against them, he sent a boat ashore with a letter which was to be delivered by a native messenger to the Adelantado. The letter was delivered; a few days later a caravel was sighted which contained Bartholomew himself; and once more, after a long separation, these two friends and brothers were united.

The see-saw motion of all affairs with which Columbus had to do was in full swing. We have seen him patching up matters in Española; hurrying to Spain just in time to rescue his damaged reputation and do something to restore it; and now when he had come back it was but a sorry tale that Bartholomew had to tell him. A fortress had been built at the Hayna gold-mines, but provisions had been so scarce that there had been something like a famine among the workmen there; no digging had been done, no planting, no making of the place fit for human occupation and industry. Bartho-

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lomeu had been kept busy in collecting the native tribute, and in planning out the beginnings of the settlement at the mouth of the river Ozema, which was at first called the New Isabella, but was afterwards named San Domingo in honour of old Domenico at Savona. The cacique Behechio had been giving trouble; had indeed marched out with an army against Bartholomew, but had been more or less reconciled by the intervention of his sister Anacaona, widow of the late Caonabo, who had apparently transferred her affections to Governor Bartholomew. The battle was turned into a friendly pagan festival—one of the last ever held on that once happy island—in which native girls danced in a green grove, with the beautiful Anacaona, dressed only in garlands, carried on a litter in their midst.

But in the Vega Real, where a chapel had been built by the priests of the neighbouring settlement who were beginning to make converts, trouble had arisen in consequence of an outrage on the wife of the cacique Guarionex. The chapel was raided, the shrine destroyed, and the sacred vessels carried off. The Spaniards seized a number of Indians whom they suspected of having had a hand in the desecration, and burned them at the stake in the most approved manner of the Inquisition—a hideous punishment that fanned the remaining embers of the native spirit into flame, and produced a hostile combination of Guarionex and several other caciques, whose rebellion it took the Adelantado some trouble and display of arms to quench.



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But the worst news of all was the treacherous revolt of Francisco Roldan, a Spaniard who had once been a servant of the Admiral's, and who had been raised by him to the office of judge in the island—an able creature, but, like too many recipients of Christopher's favour, a treacherous rascal at bottom. As soon as the Admiral's back was turned Roldan had begun to make mischief, stirring up the discontent that was never far below the surface of life in the colony, and getting together a large band of rebellious ruffians. He had a plan to murder Bartholomew Columbus and place himself at the head of the colony, but this fell through. Then, in Bartholomew's absence, he had a passage with James Columbus, who had now returned to the island and had resumed his official duties at Isabella. Bartholomew, who was at another part of the coast collecting tribute, had sent a caravel laden with cotton to Isabella, and well-meaning James had her drawn up on the beach. Roldan took the opportunity to represent this innocent action as a sign of the intolerable autocracy of the Columbus family, who did not even wish a vessel to be in a condition to sail for Spain with news of their misdeeds. Insolent Roldan formally asks James to send the caravel to Spain with supplies; poor James refuses and, perhaps being at bottom afraid of Roldan and his insolences, despatches him to the Vega Real with a force to bring to order some caciques who had been giving trouble. Possibly to his surprise, although not to ours, Roldan departs with alacrity at the head of seventy armed men. Honest,

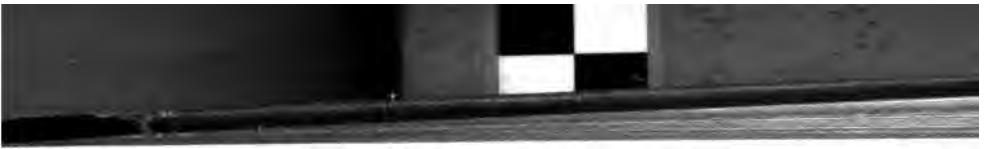




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zealous James, no doubt; but also, we begin to fear, stupid James.

The Vega Real was the most attractive part of the colony, and the scene of infinite idleness and debauchery in the early days of the Spanish settlement. As Margarite and other mutineers had acted, so did Roldan and his soldiers now act, making sallies against several of the chain of forts that stretched across the island, and even upon Isabella itself; and returning to the Vega to the enjoyment of primitive wild pleasures. Roldan and Bartholomew Columbus stalked each other about the island with armed forces for several months, Roldan besieging Bartholomew in the fortress at the Vega, which he had occupied in Roldan's absence, and trying to starve him out there. The arrival in February 1498 of the two ships which had been sent out from Spain in advance, and which brought also the news of the Admiral's undamaged favour at Court, and of the royal confirmation of Bartholomew's title, produced for the moment a good moral effect; Roldan went and sulked in the mountains, refusing to have any parley or communication with the Adelantado, declining indeed to treat with any one until the Admiral himself should return. In the meantime his influence with the natives was strong enough to produce a native revolt, which Bartholomew had only just succeeded in suppressing when Christopher arrived on August 30th.



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The Admiral was not a little distressed to find that the three ships from which he had parted company at Ferro had not yet arrived. His own voyage ought to have taken far longer than theirs; they had now been nine weeks at sea, and there was nothing to account for their long delay. When at last they did appear, however, they brought with them only a new complication. They had lost their way among the islands and had been searching about for Española, finally making a landfall there on the coast of Xaragua, the south-western province of the island, where Roldan and his followers were established. Roldan had received them and, concealing the fact of his treachery, procured a large store of provisions from them, his followers being meanwhile busy among the crews of the ships inciting them to mutiny and telling them of the oppression of the Admiral's rule and the joys of a lawless life. The gaol-birds were nothing loth; after eight weeks at sea a spell ashore in this pleasant land, with all kinds of indulgences which did not come within the ordinary regimen of convicts and sailors, greatly appealing to them. The result was that more than half of the crews mutinied and joined Roldan, and the captains were obliged to put to sea with their small loyal remnant. Carvajal remained behind in order to try to persuade Roldan to give himself up; but Roldan had no such idea, and Carvajal had to make his way by land to San Domingo, where he made his report to the Admiral.

Roldan has in fact delivered a kind of ultimatum.



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He will surrender to no one but the Admiral, and that only on condition that he gets a free pardon. If negotiations are opened, Roldan will treat with no one but Carvajal. The Admiral, whose grip of the situation is getting weaker and weaker, finds himself in a difficulty. His loyal army is only some seventy strong, while Roldan has, of disloyal settlers, gaol-birds, and sailors, much more than that. The Admiral, since he cannot reduce his enemy's force by capturing them, seeks to do it by bribing them; and the greatest bribe that he can think of to offer to these malcontents is that any who like may have a free passage home in the five caravels which are now waiting to return to Spain. To such a pass have things come in the paradise of Española! But the rabble finds life pleasant enough in Xaragua, where they are busy with indescribable pleasures; and for the moment there is no great response to this invitation to be gone. Columbus therefore despatches his ships, with such rabble of colonists, gaol-birds, and mariners as have already had their fill both of pain and pleasure, and writes his usual letter to the Sovereigns—half full of the glories of the new discoveries he has made, the other half setting forth the evil doings of Roldan, and begging that he may be summoned to Spain for trial there. Incidentally, also, he requests a further licence for two years for the capture and despatch of slaves to Spain. So the vessels sail back on October 18, 1498, and the Admiral turns wearily to the task of disentangling the web of difficulty that has woven itself about him.



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Carvajal and Ballester—another loyal captain—were sent with a letter to Roldan urging him to come to terms, and Carvajal and Ballester added their own honest persuasions. But Roldan was firm; he wished to be quit of the Admiral and his rule, and to live independently in the island; and of his followers, although some here and there showed signs of submission, the greater number were so much in love with anarchy that they could not be counted upon. For two months negotiations of a sort were continued, Roldan even presenting himself under a guarantee of safety at San Domingo, where he had a fruitless conference with the Admiral; where also he had an opportunity of observing what a sorry state affairs in the capital were in, and what a mess Columbus was making of it all. Roldan, being a simple man, though a rascal, had only to remain firm in order to get his way against a mind like the Admiral's, and get his way he ultimately did. The Admiral made terms of a kind most humiliating to him, and utterly subversive of his influence and authority. The mutineers were not only to receive a pardon but a certificate (good Heavens!) of good conduct. Caravels were to be sent to convey them to Spain; and they were to be permitted to carry with them all the slaves that they had collected and all the native young women whom they had ravished from their homes.

Columbus signs this document on the 21st of November, and promises that the ships shall be ready in fifty days; and then, at his wits' end, and hearing of irregularities

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in the interior of the island, sets off with Bartholomew to inspect the posts and restore them to order. In his absence the see-saw, in due obedience to the laws that govern all see-saws, gives a lurch to the other side, and things go all wrong again in San Domingo. The preparations for the despatch of the caravels are neglected as soon as his back is turned; not fifty days, but nearly one hundred days elapse before they are ready to sail from San Domingo to Xaragua. Even then they are delayed by storms and head-winds; and when they do arrive Roldan and his company will not embark in them. The agreement has been broken; a new one must be made. Columbus, returning to San Domingo after long and harassing struggles on the other end of the see-saw, gets news of this deadlock, and at the same time has news from Fonseca in Spain of a far from agreeable character. His complaints against the people under him have been received by the Sovereigns and will be duly considered, but their Majesties have not time at the moment to go into them. That is the gist of it, and very cold cheer it is for the Admiral, balancing himself on this turbulent see-saw with anxious eyes turned to Spain for encouragement and approval.

In the depression that followed the receipt of this letter he was no match for Roldan. He even himself took a caravel and sailed towards Xaragua, where he



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was met by Roldan, who boarded his ship and made his new proposals. Their impudence is astounding; and when we consider that the Admiral had in theory absolute powers in the island, the fact that such proposals could be made, not to say accepted, shows how far out of relation were his actual with his nominal powers. Roldan proposed that he should be allowed to give a number of his friends a free passage to Spain; that to all who should remain free grants of land should be given; and (a free pardon and certificate of good conduct contenting him no longer) that a proclamation should be made throughout the island admitting that all the charges of disloyalty and mutiny which had been brought against him and his followers were without foundation; and, finally, that he should be restored to his office of Alcalde Mayor or chief magistrate.

Here was a bolus for Christopher to swallow; a bolus compounded of his own words, his own acts, his hope, dignity, supremacy. In dismal humiliation he accepted the terms, with the addition of a clause more scandalous still—to the effect that the mutineers reserved the right, in case the Admiral should fail in the exact performance of any of his promises, to enforce them by compulsion of arms or any other method they might think fit. This precious document was signed on September 28, 1499—just twelve months after the agreement which it was intended to replace; and the Admiral, sailing dismally back to San Domingo, ruefully pondered on the fruits of a year's delay. Even then he was trying to make



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excuses for himself, such as he made afterwards to the Sovereigns when he tried to explain that this shameful capitulation was invalid. That he signed under compulsion; that he was on board a ship, and so was not on his viceregal territory; that the rebels had already been tried, and that he had not the power to revoke a sentence which bore the authority of the Crown; that he had not the power to dispose of the Crown property—desperate, agonised shuffling of pride and self-esteem in the coils of trial and difficulty. Enough of it.



## CHAPTER VI

### AN INTERLUDE

**A** BREATH of salt air again will do us no harm as a relief from these perilous balancings of Columbus on the see-saw at Española. His true work in this world had indeed already been accomplished. When he smote the rock of western discovery many springs flowed from it, and some were destined to run in mightier channels than that which he himself followed. Among other men stirred by the news of Columbus's first voyage there was one walking the streets of Bristol in 1496 who was fired to a similar enterprise—a man of Venice, in boyhood named Zuan Caboto, but now known in England, where he has some time been settled, as Captain John Cabot. A sailor and trader who has travelled much through the known sea-roads of this world, and has a desire to travel upon others not so well known. He has been in the East, has seen the caravans of Mecca and the goods they carried, and, like Columbus, has conceived in his mind the roundness of the world as a practical fact rather than a mere mathematical theory. Hearing of Columbus's success Cabot sets what machinery in England he has access to in motion to secure for him patents





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from King Henry VII.; which patents he receives on March 5, 1496. After spending a long time in preparation, and being perhaps a little delayed by diplomatic protests from the Spanish Ambassador in London, he sails from Bristol in May 1497.

After sailing west two thousand leagues Cabot found land in the neighbourhood of Cape Breton, and was thus in all probability the first discoverer, since the Icelanders, of the mainland of the New World. He turned northward, sailed through the strait of Belle Isle, and came home again, having accomplished his task in three months. Cabot, like Columbus, believed he had seen the territory of the Great Khan, of whom he told the interested population of Bristol some strange things. He further told them of the probable riches of this new land if it were followed in a southerly direction; told them some lies also, it appears, since he said that the waters there were so dense with fish that his vessels could hardly move in them. He received a gratuity of £10 and a pension, and made a great sensation in Bristol by walking about the city dressed in fine silk garments. He took other voyages also with his son Sebastian, who followed with him the rapid widening stream of discovery and became Pilot Major of Spain, and President of the Congress appointed in 1524 to settle the conflicting pretensions of various discoverers; but so far as our narrative is concerned, having sailed across from Bristol and discovered the mainland of the New World some years before Columbus discovered it, John Cabot sails into oblivion.



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Another great conquest of the salt unknown had taken place a few days before Columbus sailed on his third voyage. The accidental discovery of the Cape by Bartholomew Diaz in 1486 had not been neglected by Portugal; and the achievements of Columbus, while they cut off Portuguese enterprise from the western ocean, had only stimulated it to greater activity within its own spheres. Vasco da Gama sailed from Lisbon in July 1497; by the end of November he had rounded the Cape of Good Hope; and in May 1498, after a long voyage full of interest, peril, and hardship he had landed at Calicut on the shores of the true India. He came back in 1499 with a battered remnant, his crew disabled by sickness and exhaustion, and half his ships lost; but he had in fact discovered a road for trade and adventure to the East that was not paved with promises, dreams, or mad affidavits, but was a real and tangible achievement, bringing its reward in commerce and wealth for Portugal. At that very moment Columbus was groping round the mainland of South America, thinking it to be the coast of Cathay, and the Garden of Eden, and God knows what other cosmographical-theological abstractions; and Portugal, busy with her arrangements for making money, could afford for the moment to look on undismayed at the development of the mine of promises discovered by the Spanish Admiral.

The anxiety of Columbus to communicate the names of things before he had made sure of their substance

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received another rude chastisement in the events that followed the receipt in Spain of his letter announcing the discovery of the Garden of Eden and the land of pearls. People in Spain were not greatly interested in his theories of the terrestrial Paradise; but more than one adventurer pricked up his ears at the name of pearls, and among the first was our old friend Alonso de Ojeda, who had returned some time before from Española and was living in Spain. His position as a member of Columbus's force on the second voyage and the distinction he had gained there gave him special opportunities of access to the letters and papers sent home by Columbus; and he found no difficulty in getting Fonseca to show him the maps and charts of the coast of Paria sent back by the Admiral, the veritable pearls which had been gathered, and the enthusiastic descriptions of the wealth of this new coast. Knowing something of Española, and of the Admiral also, and reading in the despatches of the turbulent condition of the colony, he had a shrewd idea that Columbus's hands would be kept pretty full in Española itself, and that he would have no opportunity for some time to make any more voyages of discovery. He therefore represented to Fonseca what a pity it would be if all this revenue should remain untapped just because one man had not time to attend to it, and he proposed that he should take out an expedition at his own cost and share the profits with the Crown.

This proposal was too tempting to be refused; unlike the expeditions of Columbus, which were all expenditure



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and no revenue, it promised a chance of revenue without any expenditure at all. The Paria coast, having been discovered subsequent to the agreement made with Columbus, was considered by Fonseca to be open to private enterprise; and he therefore granted Ojeda a licence to go and explore it. Among those who went with him were Amerigo Vespucci and Columbus's old pilot, Juan de la Cosa, as well as some of the sailors who had been with the Admiral on the coast of Paria and had returned in the caravels which had brought his account of it back to Spain. Ojeda sailed on May 20, 1499; made a landfall some hundreds of miles to the eastward of the Orinoco, coasted thence as far as the island of Trinidad, and sailed along the northern coast of the peninsula of Paria until he came to a country where the natives built their huts on piles in the water, and to which he gave the name of Venezuela. It was by his accidental presence on this voyage that Vespucci, the meat-contractor, came to give his name to America—a curious story of international jealousies, intrigues, lawsuits, and lies which we have not the space to deal with here. After collecting a considerable quantity of pearls Ojeda, who was beginning to run short of provisions, turned eastward again and sought the coast of Española, where we shall presently meet with him again.

And Ojeda was not the only person in Spain who was enticed by Columbus's glowing descriptions to go



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and look for the pearls of Paria. There was in fact quite a reunion of old friends of his and ours in the western ocean, though they went thither in a spirit far different from that of ancient friendship. Pedro Alonso Niño, who had also been on the Paria coast with Columbus, who had come home with the returning ships, and whose patience (for he was an exceedingly practical man) had perhaps been tried by the strange doings of the Admiral in the Gulf of Paria, decided that he as well as any one else might go and find some pearls. Niño is a poor man, having worked hard in all his voyagings backwards and forwards across the Atlantic; but he has a friend with money, one Luis Guerra, who provides him with the funds necessary for fitting out a small caravel about the size of his old ship the *Niña*. Guerra, who has the money, also has a brother Christoval; and his conditions are that Christoval shall be given the command of the caravel. Practical Niño does not care so long as he reaches the place where the pearls are. He also applies to Fonseca for licence to make discoveries; and, duly receiving it, sails from Palos in the beginning of June 1499, hot upon the track of Ojeda.

They did a little quiet discovery, principally in the domain of human nature, caroused with the friendly natives, but attended to business all the time; with the result that in the following April they were back in Spain with a treasure of pearls out of which, after Niño had been made independent for life and Guerra, Christoval, and the rest of them had their shares, there remained a



## AN INTERLUDE

handsome sum for the Crown. An extremely practical, business-like voyage this; full of lessons for our poor Christopher, could he but have known and learned them.

Yet another of our old friends profited by the Admiral's discovery. What Vincenti Yañez Pinzon has been doing all these years we have no record; living at Palos, perhaps, doing a little of his ordinary coasting business, administering the estates of his brother Martin Alonso, and, almost for a certainty, talking pretty big about who it was that really did all the work in the discovery of the New World. Out of the obscurity of conjecture he emerges into fact in December 1499, when he is found at Palos fitting out four caravels for the purpose of exploring farther along the coast of the southern mainland. That he also was after pearls is pretty certain; but on the other hand he was more of a sailor than an adventurer, was a discoverer at heart, and had no small share of the family taste for sea-travel. He took a more southerly course than any of the others and struck the coast of America south of the equator on January 20, 1500. He sailed north past the mouths of the Amazon and Orinoco through the Gulf of Paria, and reached Española in June 1500. He only paused there to take in provisions, and sailed to the west in search of further discoveries; but he lost two of his caravels in a gale and had to put back to Española.



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He sailed thence for Palos, and reached home in September 1500, having added no inconsiderable share to the mass of new geographical knowledge that was being accumulated. In later years he took a high place in the maritime world of Spain.

And finally, to complete the account of the chief minor discoveries of these two busy years, we must mention Pedro Alvarez Cabral of Portugal, who was despatched in March 1500 from Lisbon to verify the discoveries of Da Gama. He reached Calicut six months later, losing on the voyage four of his caravels and most of his company. Among the lost was Bartholomew Diaz, the first discoverer of the Cape of Good Hope, who was on this voyage in a subordinate capacity, and whose bones were left to dissolve in the stormy waters that beat round the Cape whose barrier he was the first to pass. The chief event of this voyage, however, was not the reaching of Calicut nor the drowning of Diaz (which was chiefly of importance to himself, poor soul!) but the discovery of Brazil, which Cabral made in following the southerly course too far to the west. He landed there, in the Bay of Porto Seguro, on May 1, 1500, and took formal possession of the land for the Crown of Portugal, naming it Vera Cruz, or the Land of the True Cross.

## AN INTERLUDE

In the assumption of Columbus and his contemporaries all these doings were held to detract from the glory of his own achievements, and were the subject of endless affidavits, depositions, quarrels, arguments, proofs and claims in the great lawsuit that was in after years carried on between the Crown of Spain and the heirs of Columbus concerning his titles and revenues. We, however, may take a different view. With the exception of the discoveries of the Cape of Good Hope and the coast of Brazil all these enterprises were directly traceable to Columbus's own achievements and were inspired by his example. The things that a man can do in his own person are limited by the laws of time and space; it is only example and influence that are infinite and illimitable, and in which the spirit of any achievement can find true immortality.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE THIRD VOYAGE—(*continued*)

**I**T may perhaps be wearisome to the reader to return to the tangled and depressing situation in Española, but it cannot be half so wearisome as it was for Columbus, whom we left enveloped in that dark cloud of error and surrender in which he sacrificed his dignity and good faith to the impudent demands of a mutinous servant. To his other troubles in San Domingo the presence of this Roldan was now added; and the reinstated Alcalde was not long in making use of the victory he had gained. He bore himself with intolerable arrogance and insolence, discharging one of Columbus's personal bodyguard on the ground that no one should hold any office on the island except with his consent. He demanded grants of land for himself and his followers, which Columbus held himself obliged to concede; and the Admiral, further to pacify him, invented a very disastrous system of *repartimientos*, under which certain chiefs were relieved from paying tribute on condition of furnishing feudal service to the settlers—a system which rapidly developed into the most cruel and oppressive kind of slavery. The Admiral at this time also, in despair of keeping things quiet by his old methods of peace and



### THIRD VOYAGE (*continued*)

conciliation, created a kind of police force which roamed about the island, exacting tribute and meting out summary punishment to all defaulters. Among other concessions weakly made to Roldan at this time was the gift of the Crown estate of Esperanza, situated in the Vega Real, whither he betook himself and embarked on what was nothing more nor less than a despotic reign, entirely ignoring the regulations and prerogatives of the Admiral, and taking prisoners and administering punishment just as he pleased. The Admiral was helpless, and thought of going back to Spain, but the condition of the island was such that he did not dare to leave it. Instead, he wrote a long letter to the Sovereigns, full of complaints against other people and justifications of himself, in the course of which he set forth those quibbling excuses for his capitulation to Roldan which we have already heard. And there was a pathetic request at the end of the letter that his son Diego might be sent out to him. As I have said, Columbus was by this time a prematurely old man, and feeling the clouds gathering about him, and the loneliness and friendlessness of his position at Española, he instinctively looked to the next generation for help, and to the presence of his own son for sympathy and comfort.

It was at this moment (September 5, 1499) that a diversion arose in the rumour that four caravels had been seen off the western end of Española and duly

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reported to the Admiral; and this announcement was soon followed by the news that they were commanded by Ojeda, who was collecting dye-wood in the island forests. Columbus, although he had so far as we know had no previous difficulties with Ojeda, had little cause now to credit any adventurer with kindness towards himself; and Ojeda's secrecy in not reporting himself at San Domingo, and, in fact, his presence on the island at all without the knowledge of the Admiral, were sufficient evidence that he was there to serve his own ends. Some gleam of Christopher's old cleverness in handling men was now shown by his instructing Roldan to sally forth and bring Ojeda to order. It was a case of setting a thief to catch a thief and, as it turned out, was not a bad stroke. Roldan, nothing loth, sailed round to that part of the coast where Ojeda's ships were anchored, and asked to see his licence; which was duly shown to him and rather took the wind out of his sails. He heard a little gossip from Ojeda, moreover, which had its own significance for him. The Queen was ill; Columbus was in disgrace; there was talk of superseding him. Ojeda promised to sail round to San Domingo and report himself; but instead, he sailed to the east along the coast of Xaragua, where he got into communication with some discontented Spanish settlers and concocted a scheme for leading them to San Domingo to demand redress for their imagined grievances. Roldan, however, who had come to look for Ojeda, discovered him at this point; and there ensued some very pretty



### THIRD VOYAGE (*continued*)

play between the two rascals, chiefly in trickery and treachery, such as capturing each other's boats and emissaries, laying traps for one another, and taking prisoner one another's crews. The end of it was that Ojeda left the island without having reported himself to Columbus, but not before he had completed his business—which was that of provisioning his ships and collecting dye-wood and slaves. •

And so *exit* Ojeda from the Columbian drama. Of his own drama only one more act remained to be played; which, for the sake of our past interest in him, we will mention here. Chiefly on account of his intimacy with Fonseca he was some years later given a governorship in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Darien; Juan de la Cosa accompanying him as unofficial partner. Ojeda has no sooner landed there than he is fighting the natives; natives too many for him this time; Ojeda forced to hide in the forest, where he finds the body of de la Cosa, who has come by a shocking death. Ojeda afterwards tries to govern his colony, but is no good at that; cannot govern his own temper, poor fellow. Quarrels with his crew, is put in irons, carried to Española, and dies there (1515) in great poverty and eclipse. One of the many, evidently, who need a strong guiding hand, and perish without it.

It really began to seem as though Roldan, having had his fling and secured the excessive privileges that he coveted, had decided that loyalty to Christopher was for the present

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the most profitable policy ; but the mutinous spirit that he had cultivated in his followers for his own ends could not be so readily converted into this cheap loyalty. More trouble was yet to come of this rebellion. There was in the island a young Spanish aristocrat, Fernando de Guevara by name, one of the many who had come out in the hope of enjoying himself and making a fortune quickly, whose more than outrageously dissolute life in San Domingo had caused Columbus to banish him thence ; and he was now living near Xaragua with a cousin of his, Adrian de Moxeca, who had been one of the ringleaders in Roldan's conspiracy. Within this pleasant province of Xaragua lived, as we have seen, Anacaona, the sister of Caonabo, the Lord of the House of Gold. She herself was a beautiful woman, called by her subjects Bloom of the Gold ; and she had a still more beautiful daughter, Higuamota, who appears in history, like so many other women, on account of her charms and what came of them.

Of pretty Higuamota, who once lived like a dryad among the groves of Española and has been dead now for so long, we know nothing except that she was beautiful, which, although she doubtless did not think so while she lived, turns out to have been the most important thing about her. Young Guevara, coming to stay with his cousin Adrian, becomes a visitor at the house of Anacaona ; sees the pretty daughter and falls in love with her. Other people also, it appears, have been in a similar state, but Higuamota is not very accessible ; a fact which of course adds to the interest of the chase, and turns dissolute



### THIRD VOYAGE (*continued*)

Fernando's idle preference into something like a passion. Roldan, who has also had an eye upon her, and apparently no more than an eye, discovers that Fernando, in order to gratify his passion, is proposing to go the absurd length of marrying the young woman, and has sent for a priest for that purpose. Roldan, instigated thereto by primitive forces, thinks it would be impolitic for a Spanish grandee to marry with a heathen; very well, then, Fernando will have her baptized—nothing simpler when water and a priest are handy. Roldan, seeing that the young man is serious, becomes peremptory, and orders him to leave Xaragua. Fernando ostentatiously departs, but is discovered a little later actually living in the house of Anacaona, who apparently is sympathetic to Love's young dream. Once more ordered away, this time with anger and threats, Guevara changes his tune and implores Roldan to let him stay, promising that he will give up the marriage project and also, no doubt, the no-marriage project. But Guevara has sympathisers. The mutineers have not forgiven Roldan for deserting them and becoming a lawful instead of an unlawful ruler. They are all on the side of Guevara, who accordingly moves to the next stage of island procedure, and sets on foot some kind of plot to kill Roldan and the Admiral. Fortunately where there is treachery it generally works both ways; this plot came to the ears of the authorities; the conspirators were arrested and sent to San Domingo.

This action came near to bringing the whole island about Columbus's ears. Adrian de Moxeca was furious



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at what he conceived to be the treachery of Roldan, for Roldan was in such a pass that the barest act of duty was necessarily one of treachery to his friends. Moxeca took the place of chief rebel that Roldan had vacated; rallied the mutineers round him, and was on the point of starting for Concepcion, one of the chain of forts across the island where Columbus was at present staying, when the Admiral discovered his plan. All that was strongest and bravest in him rose up at this menace. His weakness and cowardice were forgotten; and with the spirit of an old sea-lion he sallied forth against the mutineers. He had only a dozen men on whom he could rely, but he armed them well and marched secretly and swiftly under cloud of night to the place where Moxeca and his followers were encamped in fond security, and there suddenly fell upon them, capturing Moxeca and the chief ringleaders. The rest scattered in terror and escaped. Moxeca was hurried off to the battlements of San Domingo and there, in the very midst of a long-drawn trembling confession to the priest in attendance, was swung off the ramparts and hanged. The others, although also condemned to death, were kept in irons in the fortress, while Christopher and Bartholomew, roused at last to vigorous action, scoured the island hunting down the remainder, killing some who resisted, hanging others on the spot, and imprisoning the remainder at San Domingo.

After these prompt measures peace reigned for a time in the island, and Columbus was perhaps surprised to



### THIRD VOYAGE (*continued*)

see what wholesome effects could be produced by a little exemplary severity. The natives, who under the weakness of his former rule had been discontented and troublesome, now settled down submissively to their yoke; the Spaniards began to work in earnest on their farms; and there descended upon island affairs a brief St. Martin's Summer of peace before the final winter of blight and death set in. The Admiral, however, was obviously in precarious health; his ophthalmia became worse, and the stability of his mind suffered. He had dreams and visions of divine help and comfort, much needed by him, poor soul, in all his tribulations and adversities. Even yet the cup was not full.

We must now turn back to Spain and try to form some idea of the way in which the doings of Columbus were being regarded there if we are to understand the extraordinary calamity that was soon to befall him. It must be remembered first of all that his enterprise had never really been popular from the first. It was carried out entirely by the energy and confidence of Queen Isabella, who almost alone of those in power believed in it as a thing which was certain to bring ultimate glory, as well as riches and dominion, to Spain and the Catholic faith. As we have seen, there had been a brief ebullition of popular favour when Columbus returned from his first voyage, but it was a popularity excited solely by the promises of great wealth that Columbus was continually





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holding forth. When those promises were not immediately fulfilled popular favour subsided; and when the adventurers who had gone out to the new islands on the strength of those promises had returned with shattered health and empty pockets there was less chance than ever of the matter being regarded in its proper light by the people of Spain. Columbus had either found a gold mine or he had found nothing—that was the way in which the matter was popularly regarded. Those who really understood the significance of his discoveries and appreciated their scientific importance did not merely stay at home in Spain and raise a clamour; they went out in the Admiral's footsteps and continued the work that he had begun. Even King Ferdinand, for all his cleverness, had never understood the real lines on which the colony should have been developed. His eyes were fixed upon Europe; he saw in the discoveries of Columbus a means rather than an end; and looked to them simply as a source of revenue with the help of which he could carry on his ambitious schemes. And when, as other captains made voyages confirming and extending the work of Columbus, he did begin to understand the significance of what had been done, he realised too late that the Admiral had been given powers far in excess of what was prudent or sensible.

During all the time that Columbus and his brothers were struggling with the impossible situation at Española there was but one influence at work in Spain, and that was entirely destructive to the Admiral. Every caravel



### THIRD VOYAGE (*continued*)

that came from the New World brought two things. It brought a crowd of discontented colonists, many of whom had grave reasons for their discontent; and it brought letters from the Admiral in which more and more promises were held out, but in which also querulous complaints against this and that person, and against the Spanish settlers generally, were set forth at wearisome length. It is not remarkable that the people of Spain, even those who were well disposed towards Columbus, began to wonder if these two things were not cause and effect. The settlers may have been a poor lot, but they were the material with which Columbus had to deal; he had powers enough, Heaven knew, powers of life and death; and the problem began to resolve itself in the minds of those at the head of affairs in Spain in the following terms. Given an island, rich and luxuriant beyond the dreams of man; given a native population easily subdued; given settlers of one kind or another; and given a Viceroy with unlimited powers—could he or could he not govern the island? It was a by no means unfair way of putting the case, and there is little justice in the wild abuse that has been hurled at Ferdinand and Isabella on this ground. Columbus may have been the greatest genius in the world; very possibly they admitted it; but in the meanwhile Spain was resounding with the cries of the impoverished colonists who had returned from his ocean Paradise. No doubt the Sovereigns ignored them as much as they possibly could; but when it came to ragged emaciated beggars coming



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in batches of fifty at a time and sitting in the very courts of the Alhambra, exhibiting bunches of grapes and saying that that was all they could afford to live upon since they had come back from the New World, some notice had to be taken of it. Even young Diego and Ferdinand, the Admiral's sons, came in for the obloquy with which his name was associated; the colonial vagabonds hung round the portals of the palace and cried out upon them as they passed so that they began to dislike going out. Columbus, as we know, had plenty of enemies who had access to the King and Queen; and never had enemies an easier case to urge. Money was continually being spent on ships and supplies; where was the return for it? What about the Ophir of Solomon? What about the Land of Spices? What about the pearls? And if you want to add a touch of absurdity, what about the Garden of Eden and the Great Khan?

To the most impartial eyes it began to appear as though Columbus were either an impostor or a fool. There is no evidence that Ferdinand and Isabella thought that he was an impostor or that he had wilfully deceived them; but there is some evidence that they began to have an inkling as to what kind of a man he really was, and as to his unfitness for governing a colony. Once more something had to be done. The sending out of a commissioner had not been a great success before, but in the difficulties of the situation it seemed the only thing. Still there was a good deal of hesitation, and it is probable that Isabella was not yet fully convinced



### THIRD VOYAGE (*continued*)

of the necessity for this grave step. This hesitation was brought to an end by the arrival from Española of the ships bearing the followers of Roldan, who had been sent back under the terms of Columbus's feeble capitulation. The same ships brought a great quantity of slaves, which the colonists were able to show had been brought by the permission of the Admiral; they carried native girls also, many of them pregnant, many with new-born babies; and these also came with the permission of the Admiral. The ships further carried the Admiral's letter complaining of the conspiracy of Roldan and containing the unfortunate request for a further licence to extend the slave trade. These circumstances were probably enough to turn the scale of Isabella's opinion against the Admiral's administration. The presence of the slaves particularly angered her kind womanly heart. "What right has he to give away my vassals?" she exclaimed, and ordered that they should all be sent back, and that in addition all the other slaves who had come home should be traced and sent back; although of course it was impossible to carry out this last order.

At any rate there was no longer any hesitation about sending out a commissioner, and the Sovereigns chose one Francisco de Bobadilla, an official of the royal household, for the performance of this difficult mission. As far as we can decipher him he was a very ordinary official personage; prejudiced, it is possible, against an administration that had produced such disastrous results and which offended his orderly official susceptibilities;

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otherwise to be regarded as a man exactly honest in the performance of what he conceived to be his duties, and entirely indisposed to allow sentiment or any other extraneous matter to interfere with such due performance. We shall have need to remember, when we see him at work in Española, that he was not sent out to judge between Columbus and his Sovereigns or between Columbus and the world, but to investigate the condition of the colony and to take what action he thought necessary. The commission which he bore to the Admiral was in the following terms :—

“El Rey é la Reina : D. Cristóbal Colon, nuestro Almirante del mar Océano : Nos habemos mandado al Comendador Francisco de Bobadilla, llevador desta, que vos hable de nuestra parte algunas cosas que él dirá : rogamos vos que le deis fe é creencia, y aquello pongais en obra. De Madrid á veinte y seis de Mayo, de noventa y nueve años. *Yo el Rey. Yo la Reina.* Por su mandado. Miguel Perez de Almazan.”

“The King and the Queen : Don Christopher Columbus, our Admiral of the Ocean-sea. We have directed Francisco de Bobadilla, the bearer of this, to speak to you for us of certain things which he will mention : we request you to give him faith and credence and to obey him. From Madrid, May 26, '99. I THE KING. I THE QUEEN. By their command. Miguel Perez de Almazan.”

In addition Bobadilla bore with him papers and authorities giving him complete control and possession of all the forts, arms, and royal property in the island,

### THIRD VOYAGE (*continued*)

in case it should be necessary for him to use them; and he also had a number of blank warrants which were signed, but the substance of which was not filled in. This may seem very dreadful to us, with our friendship for the poor Admiral; but considering the grave state of affairs as represented to the King and Queen, who had their duties to their colonial subjects as well as to Columbus, there was nothing excessive in it. If they were to send out a commissioner at all, and if they were satisfied, as presumably they were, that the man they had chosen was trustworthy, it was only right to make his authority absolute. Thus equipped Francisco de Bobadilla sailed from Spain in July 1500.



**BOOK IV**  
**TOWARDS THE SUNSET**





**MY OWN WILL I BRING AGAIN, AS I DID  
SOME TIME FROM THE DEEP OF THE SEA**





## CHAPTER I

### DEGRADATION

**T**HE first things seen by Francisco de Bobadilla when he entered the harbour of San Domingo on the morning of the 23rd of August 1500 were the bodies of several Spaniards hanging from a gibbet near the water-side—a grim confirmation of what he had heard about the troubled state of the island. While he was waiting for the tide so that he might enter the harbour a boat put off from shore to ascertain who was on board the caravels; and it was thus informally that Bobadilla first announced that he had come to examine into the state of the island. Columbus was not at San Domingo, but was occupied in settling the affairs of the Vega Real; Bartholomew also was absent, stamping out the last smouldering embers of rebellion in Xaragua; and only James was in command to deal with this awkward situation.

Bobadilla did not go ashore the first day, but remained on board his ship receiving the visits of various discontented colonists who, getting early wind of the purpose of his visit, lost no time in currying favour with him. Probably he heard enough that first day to have damned the administration of a dozen islands; but also we must



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allow him some interest in the wonderful and strange sights that he was seeing; for Española, which has perhaps grown wearisome to us, was new to him. He had brought with him an armed body-guard of twenty-five men, and in the other caravel were the returned slaves, babies and all, under the charge of six friars. On the day following his arrival Bobadilla landed and heard mass in state, afterwards reading out his commission to the assembled people. Evidently he had received a shocking impression of the state of affairs in the island; that is the only explanation of the action suddenly taken by him, for his first public act was to demand from James the release of all the prisoners in the fortress, in order that they and their accusers should appear before him.

James is in a difficulty; and, mule-like, since he does not know which way to turn, stands stock still. He can do nothing, he says, without the Admiral's consent. The next day Bobadilla, again hearing mass in state, causes further documents to be read showing that a still greater degree of power had been entrusted to his hands. Mule-like, James still stands stock still; the greatest power on earth known to him is his eldest brother, and he will not, positively dare not, be moved by anything less than that. He refuses to give up the prisoners on any grounds whatsoever, and Bobadilla has to take the fortress by assault—an easy enough matter since the resistance is but formal.

The next act of Bobadilla's is not quite so easy to



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understand. He quartered himself in Columbus's house ; that perhaps was reasonable enough since there may not have been another house in the settlement fit to receive him ; but he also, we are told, took possession of all his papers, public and private, and also seized the Admiral's store of money and began to pay his debts with it for him, greatly to the satisfaction of San Domingo. There is an element of the comic in this interpretation of a commissioner's powers ; and it seemed as though he meant to wind up the whole Columbus business, lock, stock, and barrel. It would not be in accordance with our modern ideas of honour that a man's private papers should be seized unless he were suspected of treachery or some criminal act ; but apparently Bobadilla regarded it as necessary. We must remember that although he had only heard one side of the case it was evidently so positive, and the fruits of misgovernment were there so visibly before his eyes, that no amount of evidence in favour of Columbus would make him change his mind as to his fitness to govern. Poor James, witnessing these things and unable to do anything to prevent them, finds himself suddenly relieved from the tension of the situation. Since inaction is his note, he shall be indulged in it ; and he is clapped in irons and cast into prison. James can hardly believe the evidence of his senses. He has been studying theology lately, it appears, with a view to entering the Church and perhaps being some day made Bishop of Española, but this new turn of affairs looks as though there were to be an

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The trial was now begun, if trial that can be called which takes place in the absence of the culprit or his representative. It was rather the hearing of charges against Christopher and his brothers; and we may be sure that every discontented feeling in the island found voice and was formulated into some incriminating charge. Columbus was accused of oppressing the Spanish settlers by making them work at harsh and unnecessary labour; of cutting down their allowance of food, and restricting their liberty; of punishing them cruelly and unduly; of waging wars unjustly with the natives; of interfering with the conversion of the natives by hastily collecting them and sending them home as slaves; of having secreted treasures which should have been delivered to the Sovereigns—this last charge, like some of the others, true. He had an accumulation of pearls of which he had given no account to Fonseca, and the possession of which he excused by the queer statement that he was waiting to announce it until he could match it with an equal amount of gold! He was accused of hating the Spaniards, who were represented as having risen in the late rebellion in order to protect the natives and avenge their own wrongs; and generally of having abused his office in order to enrich his own family and gratify his own feelings. Bobadilla appeared to believe all these charges; or perhaps he recognised their nature, and yet saw that there was a sufficient degree of truth in them to disqualify the Admiral in his position as Viceroy. In all these affairs his right-hand man was Roldan, whose loyalty to Columbus,



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mount in the island. For reply to this he received the Sovereigns' message to him which we have seen, commanding him to put himself under the direction of Bobadilla. There was no mistaking this; there was the order in plain words; and with I know not what sinkings of heart Columbus at last set out for San Domingo. Bobadilla had expected resistance, but the Admiral, whatever his faults, knew how to behave with dignity in a humiliating position; and he came into the city unattended on August 23, 1500. On the outskirts of the town he was met by Bobadilla's guards, arrested, put in chains, and lodged in the fortress, the tower of which exists to this day. He seemed to himself to be the victim of a particularly petty and galling kind of treachery, for it was his own cook, a man called Espinoza, who riveted his gyves upon him.

There remained Bartholomew to be dealt with, and he, being at large and in command of the army, might not have proved such an easy conquest, but that Christopher, at Bobadilla's request, wrote and advised him to submit to arrest without any resistance. Whether Bartholomew acquiesced or not is uncertain; what is certain is that he also was captured and placed in irons, and imprisoned on one of the caravels. James in one caravel, Bartholomew in another, and Christopher in the fortress, and all in chains—this is what it has come to with the three sons of old Domenico.

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“By the life of your Excellency what I say is true,” was the reply, and the news came with a wave of relief to the panic-stricken heart of the Admiral.

In the middle of October the caravels sailed from San Domingo, and the last sounds heard by Columbus from the land of his discovery were the hoots and jeers and curses hurled after him by the treacherous, triumphant rabble on the shore. Villegio treated him and his brothers with as much kindness as possible, and offered, when they had got well clear of Española, to take off the Admiral's chains. But Columbus, with a fine counterstroke of picturesque dignity, refused to have them removed. Already, perhaps, he had realised that his subjection to this cruel and quite unnecessary indignity would be one of the strongest things in his favour when he got to Spain, and he decided to suffer as much of it as he could. “My Sovereigns commanded me to submit to what Bobadilla should order. By his authority I wear these chains, and I shall continue to wear them until they are removed by order of the Sovereigns; and I will keep them afterwards as reminders of the reward I have received for my services.” Thus the Admiral, beginning to pick up his spirits again, and to feel the better for the sea air.

The voyage home was a favourable one and in the course of it Columbus wrote the following letter to a friend of his at Court, Doña Juana de la Torre, who

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had been nurse to Prince Juan and was known by him to be a favourite of the Queen:—

“**MOST VIRTUOUS LADY,**—Though my complaint of the world is new, its habit of ill-using is very ancient. I have had a thousand struggles with it, and have thus far withstood them all, but now neither arms nor counsels avail me, and it cruelly keeps me under water. Hope in the Creator of all men sustains me: His help was always very ready; on another occasion, and not long ago, when I was still more overwhelmed, He raised me with His right arm, saying, ‘O man of little faith, arise: it is I; be not afraid.’

“I came with so much cordial affection to serve these Princes, and have served them with such service, as has never been heard of or seen.

“Of the new heaven and earth which our Lord made, when Saint John was writing the Apocalypse, after what was spoken by the mouth of Isaiah, He made me the messenger, and showed me where it lay. In all men there was disbelief, but to the Queen, my Lady, He gave the spirit of understanding, and great courage, and made her heiress of all, as a dear and much loved daughter. I went to take possession of all this in her royal name. They sought to make amends to her for the ignorance they had all shown by passing over their little knowledge and talking of obstacles and expenses. Her Highness, on the other hand, approved of it, and supported it as far as she was able.

“Seven years passed in discussion and nine in execution. During this time very remarkable and noteworthy things occurred whereof no idea at all had been formed.



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I have arrived at, and am in, such a condition that there is no person so vile but thinks he may insult me: he shall be reckoned in the world as valour itself who is courageous enough not to consent to it.

“If I were to steal the Indies or the land which lies towards them, of which I am now speaking, from the altar of Saint Peter, and give them to the Moors, they could not show greater enmity towards me in Spain. Who would believe such a thing where there was always so much magnanimity?

“I should have much desired to free myself from this affair had it been honourable towards my Queen to do so. The support of our Lord and of her Highness made me persevere: and to alleviate in some measure the sorrows which death had caused her, I undertook a fresh voyage to the new heaven and earth which up to that time had remained hidden; and if it is not held there in esteem like the other voyages to the Indies, that is no wonder, because it came to be looked upon as my work.

“The Holy Spirit inflamed Saint Peter and twelve others with him, and they all contended here below, and their toils and hardships were many, but last of all they gained the victory.

“This voyage to Paria I thought would somewhat appease them on account of the pearls, and of the discovery of gold in Española. I ordered the pearls to be collected and fished for by people with whom an arrangement was made that I should return for them, and, as I understood, they were to be measured by the bushel. If I did not write about this to their Highnesses, it was because I wished to have first of all done the same thing with the gold.



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“The result to me in this has been the same as in many other things; I should not have lost them nor my honour, if I had sought my own advantage, and had allowed Española to be ruined, or if my privileges and contracts had been observed. And I say just the same about the gold which I had then collected, and [for] which with such great afflictions and toils I have, by divine power, almost perfected [the arrangements].

“When I went from Paria I found almost half the people from Española in revolt, and they have waged war against me until now, as against a Moor; and the Indians on the other side grievously [harassed me]. At this time Hojeda arrived and tried to put the finishing stroke: he said that their Highnesses had sent him with promises of gifts, franchises and pay: he gathered together a great band, for in the whole of Española there are very few save vagabonds, and not one with wife and children. This Hojeda gave me great trouble; he was obliged to depart, and left word that he would soon return with more ships and people, and that he had left the Royal person of the Queen, our Lady, at the point of death. Then Vincente Yanez arrived with four caravels; there was disturbance and mistrust but no mischief: the Indians talked of many others at the Cannibals [Caribbee Islands] and in Paria; and afterwards spread the news of six other caravels, which were brought by a brother of the Alcalde, but it was with malicious intent. This occurred at the very last, when the hope that their Highnesses would ever send any ships to the Indies was almost abandoned, nor did we expect them; and it was commonly reported that her Highness was dead.

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“A certain Adrian about this time endeavoured to rise in rebellion again, as he had done previously, but our Lord did not permit his evil purpose to succeed. I had purposed in myself never to touch a hair of anybody’s head, but I lament to say that with this man, owing to his ingratitude, it was not possible to keep that resolve as I had intended: I should not have done less to my brother, if he had sought to kill me, and steal the dominion which my King and Queen had given me in trust.

“This Adrian, as it appears, had sent Don Ferdinand to Xaragua to collect some of his followers, and there a dispute arose with the Alcalde from which a deadly contest ensued, and he [Adrian] did not effect his purpose. The Alcalde seized him and a part of his band, and the fact was that he would have executed them if I had not prevented it; they were kept prisoners awaiting a caravel in which they might depart. The news of Hojeda which I told them made them lose the hope that he would now come again.

“For six months I had been prepared to return to their Highnesses with the good news of the gold, and to escape from governing a dissolute people who fear neither God nor their King and Queen, being full of vices and wickedness.

“I could have paid the people in full with six hundred thousand, and for this purpose I had four millions of tenths and somewhat more, besides the third of the gold.

“Before my departure I many times begged their Highnesses to send there, at my expense, some one to take charge of the administration of justice; and after finding the Alcalde in arms I renewed my supplications



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to have either some troops or at least some servant of theirs with letters patent; for my reputation is such that even if I build churches and hospitals, they will always be called dens of thieves.

“They did indeed make provision at last, but it was the very contrary of what the matter demanded: it may be successful, since it was according to their good pleasure.

“I was there for two years without being able to gain a decree of favour for myself or for those who went there, yet this man brought a coffer full: whether they will all redound to their [Highnesses] service, God knows. Indeed, to begin with, there are exemptions for twenty years, which is a man’s lifetime; and gold is collected to such an extent that there was one person who became worth five marks in four hours; whereof I will speak more fully later on.

“If it would please their Highnesses to remove the grounds of a common saying of those who know my labours, that the calumny of the people has done me more harm than much service and the maintenance of their [Highnesses] property and dominion has done me good, it would be a charity, and I should be re-established in my honour, and it would be talked about all over the world: for the undertaking is of such a nature that it must daily become more famous and in higher esteem.

“When the Commander Bobadilla came to Santo Domingo, I was at La Vega, and the Adelantado at Xaragua, where that Adrian had made a stand, but then all was quiet, and the land rich and all men at peace. On the second day after his arrival, he created himself Governor, and appointed officers and made executions,

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and proclaimed immunities of gold and tenths and in general of everything else for twenty years, which is a man's lifetime, and that he came to pay everybody in full up to that day, even though they had not rendered service; and he publicly gave notice that, as for me, he had charge to send me in irons, and my brothers likewise, as he has done, and that I should nevermore return thither, nor any other of my family: alleging a thousand disgraceful and discourteous things about me. All this took place on the second day after his arrival, as I have said, and while I was absent at a distance, without my knowing either of him or of his arrival.

“Some letters of their Highnesses signed in blank, of which he brought a number, he filled up and sent to the Alcalde and to his company with favours and commendations: to me he never sent either letter or messenger, nor has he done so to this day. Imagine what any one holding my office would think when one who endeavoured to rob their Highnesses, and who has done so much evil and mischief, is honoured and favoured, while he who maintained it at such risks is degraded.

“When I heard this I thought that this affair would be like that of Hojeda or one of the others, but I restrained myself when I learnt for certain from the friars that their Highnesses had sent him. I wrote to him that his arrival was welcome, and that I was prepared to go to the Court and had sold all I possessed by auction; and that with respect to the immunities he should not be hasty, for both that matter and the government I would hand over to him immediately as smooth as my palm. And I wrote to the same effect to the friars, but neither he nor they gave me any answer. On

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the contrary, he put himself in a warlike attitude, and compelled all who went there to take an oath to him as Governor; and they told me that it was for twenty years.

“Directly I knew of those immunities, I thought that I would repair such a great error and that he would be pleased, for he gave them without the need or occasion necessary in so vast a matter: and he gave to vagabond people what would have been excessive for a man who had brought wife and children. So I announced by word and letters that he could not use his patents because mine were those in force; and I showed them the immunities which John Aguado brought.

“All this was done by me in order to gain time, so that their Highnesses might be informed of the condition of the country, and that they might have an opportunity of issuing fresh commands as to what would best promote their service in that respect.

“It is useless to publish such immunities in the Indies: to the settlers who have taken up residence it is a pure gain, for the best lands are given to them, and at a low valuation they will be worth two hundred thousand at the end of the four years when the period of residence is ended, without their digging a spadeful in them. I would not speak thus if the settlers were married, but there are not six among them all who are not on the look-out to gather what they can and depart speedily. It would be a good thing if they should go from Castile, and also if it were known who and what they are, and if the country could be settled with honest people.

“I had agreed with those settlers that they should pay the third of the gold, and the tenths, and this at

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their own request; and they received it as a great favour from their Highnesses. I reproved them when I heard that they ceased to do this, and hoped that the Commander would do likewise, and he did the contrary.

“He incensed them against me by saying that I wanted to deprive them of what their Highnesses had given them; and he endeavoured to set them at variance with me, and did so; and he induced them to write to their Highnesses that they should never again send me back to the government, and I likewise make the same supplication to them for myself and for my whole family, as long as there are not different inhabitants. And he together with them ordered inquisitions concerning me for wickednesses the like whereof were never known in hell. Our Lord, who rescued Daniel and the three children, is present with the same wisdom and power as He had then, and with the same means, if it should please Him and be in accordance with His will.

“I should know how to remedy all this, and the rest of what has been said and has taken place since I have been in the Indies, if my disposition would allow me to seek my own advantage, and if it seemed honourable to me to do so, but the maintenance of justice and the extension of the dominion of her Highness has hitherto kept me down. Now that so much gold is found, a dispute arises as to which brings more profit, whether to go about robbing or to go to the mines. A hundred castellanos are as easily obtained for a woman as for a farm, and it is very general, and there are plenty of dealers who go about looking for girls: those from nine to ten are now in demand, and for all ages a good price must be paid.



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“I assert that the violence of the calumny of turbulent persons has injured me more than my services have profited me; which is a bad example for the present and for the future. I take my oath that a number of men have gone to the Indies who did not deserve water in the sight of God and of the world; and now they are returning thither, and leave is granted them.

“I assert that when I declared that the Commander could not grant immunities, I did what he desired, although I told him that it was to cause delay until their Highnesses should receive information from the country, and should command anew what might be for their service.

“He excited their enmity against me, and he seems, from what took place and from his behaviour, to have come as my enemy and as a very vehement one; or else the report is true that he has spent much to obtain this employment. I do not know more about it than what I hear. I never heard of an inquisitor gathering rebels together and accepting them, and others devoid of credit and unworthy of it, as witnesses against their Governor.

“If their Highnesses were to make a general inquisition there, I assure you that they would look upon it as a great wonder that the island does not founder.

“I think your Ladyship will remember that when, after losing my sails, I was driven into Lisbon by a tempest, I was falsely accused of having gone there to the King in order to give him the Indies. Their Highnesses afterwards learned the contrary, and that it was entirely malicious.

“Although I may know but little, I do not think any one considers me so stupid as not to know that



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even if the Indies were mine I could not uphold myself without the help of some Prince.

“If this be so, where could I find better support and security than in the King and Queen, our Lords, who have raised me from nothing to such great honour, and are the most exalted Princes of the world on sea and on land, and who consider that I have rendered them service, and who preserve to me my privileges and rewards: and if any one infringes them, their Highnesses increase them still more, as was seen in the case of John Aguado; and they order great honour to be conferred upon me, and, as I have already said, their Highnesses have received service from me, and keep my sons in their household; all which could by no means happen with another prince, for where there is no affection, everything else fails.

“I have now spoken thus in reply to a malicious slander, but against my will, as it is a thing which should not recur to memory even in dreams; for the Commander Bobadilla maliciously seeks in this way to set his own conduct and actions in a brighter light; but I shall easily show him that his small knowledge and great cowardice, together with his inordinate cupidity, have caused him to fail therein.

“I have already said that I wrote to him and to the friars, and immediately set out, as I told him, almost alone, because all the people were with the Adelantado, and likewise in order to prevent suspicion on his part. When he heard this, he seized Don Diego and sent him on board a caravel loaded with irons, and did the same to me upon my arrival, and afterwards to the Adelantado when he came; nor did I speak to him any more, nor

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to this day has he allowed any one to speak to me; and I take my oath that I cannot understand why I am made a prisoner.

“He made it his first business to seize the gold, which he did without measuring or weighing it and in my absence; he said that he wanted it to pay the people, and according to what I hear he assigned the chief part to himself and sent fresh exchangers for the exchanges. Of this gold I had put aside certain specimens, very big lumps, like the eggs of geese, hens, and pullets, and of many other shapes, which some persons had collected in a short space of time, in order that their Highnesses might be gladdened, and might comprehend the business upon seeing a quantity of large stones full of gold. This collection was the first to be given away, with malicious intent, so that their Highnesses should not hold the matter in any account until he has feathered his nest, which he is in great haste to do. Gold which is for melting diminishes at the fire: some chains which would weigh about twenty marks have never been seen again.

“I have been more distressed about this matter of the gold than even about the pearls, because I have not brought it to her Highness.

“The Commander at once set to work upon anything which he thought would injure me. I have already said that with six hundred thousand I could pay every one without defrauding anybody, and that I had more than four millions of tenths and constabulary [dues] without touching the gold. He made some free gifts which are ridiculous, though I believe that he began by assigning the chief part to himself. Their Highnesses will find it out when they order an account to be obtained from

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him, especially if I should be present thereat. He does nothing but reiterate that a large sum is owing, and it is what I have said, and even less. I have been much distressed that there should be sent concerning me an inquisitor who is aware that if the inquisition which he returns is very grave he will remain in possession of the government.

“Would that it had pleased our Lord that their Highnesses had sent him or some one else two years ago, for I know that I should now be free from scandal and infamy, and that my honour would not be taken from me, nor should I lose it. God is just, and will make known the why and the wherefore.

“They judge me over there as they would a governor who had gone to Sicily, or to a city or town placed under regular government, and where the laws can be observed in their entirety without fear of ruining everything; and I am greatly injured thereby

“I ought to be judged as a captain who went from Spain to the Indies to conquer a numerous and warlike people, whose customs and religion are very contrary to ours; who live in rocks and mountains, without fixed settlements, and not like ourselves: and where, by the Divine Will, I have placed under the dominion of the King and Queen, our Sovereigns, a second world, through which Spain, which was reckoned a poor country, has become the richest.

“I ought to be judged as a captain who for such a long time up to this day has borne arms without laying them aside for an hour, and by gentlemen adventurers and by custom, and not by letters, unless they were from Greeks or Romans or others of modern times of whom



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there are so many and such noble examples in Spain; or otherwise I receive great injury, because in the Indies there is neither town nor settlement.

“The gate to the gold and pearls is now open, and plenty of everything—precious stones, spices and a thousand other things—may be surely expected, and never could a worse misfortune befall me: for by the name of our Lord the first voyage would yield them just as much as would the traffic of Arabia Felix as far as Mecca, as I wrote to their Highnesses by Antonio de Torres in my reply respecting the repartition of the sea and land with the Portuguese; and afterwards it would equal that of Calicut, as I told them and put in writing at the monastery of the Mejorada.

“The news of the gold that I said I would give is, that on the day of the Nativity, while I was much tormented, being harassed by wicked Christians and by Indians, and when I was on the point of giving up everything, and if possible escaping from life, our Lord miraculously comforted me and said, ‘Fear not violence, I will provide for all things: the seven years of the term of the gold have not elapsed, and in that and in everything else I will afford thee a remedy.’

“On that day I learned that there were eighty leagues of land with mines at every point thereof. The opinion now is that it is all one. Some have collected a hundred and twenty castellanos in one day, and others ninety, and even the number of two hundred and fifty has been reached. From fifty to seventy, and in many more cases from fifteen to fifty, is considered a good day’s work, and many carry it on. The usual quantity is from six to twelve, and any one obtaining less than this is not satisfied.



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It seems to me that these mines are like others, and do not yield equally every day. The mines are new, and so are the workers: it is the opinion of everybody that even if all Castile were to go there, every individual, however inexpert he might be, would not obtain less than one or two castellanos daily, and now it is only commencing. It is true that they keep Indians, but the business is in the hands of the Christians. Behold what discernment Bobadilla had, when he gave up everything for nothing, and four millions of tenths, without any reason or even being requested, and without first notifying it to their Highnesses. And this is not the only loss.

“I know that my errors have not been committed with the intention of doing evil, and I believe that their Highnesses regard the matter just as I state it: and I know and see that they deal mercifully even with those who maliciously act to their disservice. I believe and consider it very certain that their clemency will be both greater and more abundant towards me, for I fell therein through ignorance and the force of circumstances, as they will know fully hereafter; and I indeed am their creature, and they will look upon my services, and will acknowledge day by day that they are much profited. They will place everything in the balance, even as Holy Scripture tells us good and evil will be at the day of judgment.

“If, however, they command that another person do judge me, which I cannot believe, and that it be by inquisition in the Indies, I very humbly beseech them to send thither two conscientious and honourable persons at my expense, who I believe will easily, now that gold is discovered, find five marks in four hours. In either case it is needful for them to provide for this matter.



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“The Commander on his arrival at San Domingo took up his abode in my house, and just as he found it so he appropriated everything to himself. Well and good ; perhaps he was in want of it. A pirate never acted thus towards a merchant. About my papers I have a greater grievance, for he has so completely deprived me of them that I have never been able to obtain a single one from him ; and those that would have been most useful in my exculpation are precisely those which he has kept most concealed. Behold the just and honest inquisitor ! Whatever he may have done, they tell me that there has been an end to justice, except in an arbitrary form. God, our Lord, is present with His strength and wisdom, as of old, and always punishes in the end, especially ingratitude and injuries.”

We must keep in mind the circumstances in which this letter was written if we are to judge it and the writer wisely. It is a sad example of querulous complaint, in which everything but the writer's personal point of view is ignored. No one indeed is more terrible in this world than the Man with a Grievance. How rarely will human nature in such circumstances retire into the stronghold of silence ! Columbus is asking for pity ; but as we read his letter we incline to pity him on grounds quite different from those which he represented. He complains that the people he was sent to govern have waged war against him as against a Moor ; he complains of Ojeda and of Vincenti Yañez Pinzon ; of Adrian de Moxeca, and of every other person whom



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it was his business to govern and hold in restraint. He complains of the colonists—the very people, some of them, whom he himself took and impressed from the gaols and purlieus of Cadiz; and then he mingles pious talk about Saint Peter and Daniel in the den of lions with notes on the current price of little girls and big lumps of gold like the eggs of geese, hens, and pullets. He complains that he is judged as a man would be judged who had been sent out to govern a ready-made colony, and represents instead that he went out to conquer a numerous and warlike people “whose custom and religion are very contrary to ours, and who lived in rocks and mountains”; forgetting that when it suited him for different purposes he described the natives as so peaceable and unwarlike that a thousand of them would not stand against one Christian, and that in any case he was sent out to create a constitution and not merely to administer one. Very sore indeed is Christopher as he reveals himself in this letter, appealing now to his correspondent, now to the King and Queen, now to that God who is always on the side of the complainant. “God our Lord is present with His strength and wisdom, as of old, and always punishes in the end, especially ingratitude and injuries.” Not boastfulness and weakness, let us hope, or our poor Admiral will come off badly.



## CHAPTER II

### CRISIS IN THE ADMIRAL'S LIFE


**C**OLUMBUS was not far wrong in his estimate of the effect likely to be produced by his manacles, and when the ships of Villegio arrived at Cadiz in October 1500 the spectacle of an Admiral in chains produced a degree of commiseration which must have exceeded his highest hopes. He was now in his fiftieth year and of an extremely venerable appearance, his kindling eye looking forth from under brows of white, his hair and beard snow-white, his face lined and spiritualised with suffering and sorrow. It must be remembered that before the Spanish people he had always appeared in more or less state. They had not that intimacy with him, an intimacy which perhaps brought contempt, which the people in Española enjoyed; and in Spain, therefore, the contrast between his former grandeur and this condition of shame and degradation was the more striking. It was a fact that the people of Spain could not neglect. It touched their sense of the dramatic and picturesque, touched their hearts also perhaps—hearts quick to burn, quick to forget. They had forgotten him before, now they burned with indignation at the picture of this venerable and much-suffering man arriving in disgrace.



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His letter to Doña Juana, hastily despatched by him, probably through the office of some friendly soul on board, immediately on his arrival at Cadiz, was the first news from the ship received by the King and Queen, and naturally it caused them a shock of surprise. It was followed by the despatches from Bobadilla and by a letter from the Alcalde of Cadiz announcing that Columbus and his brothers were in his custody awaiting the royal orders. Perhaps Ferdinand and Isabella had already repented their drastic action and had entertained some misgivings as to its results; but it is more probable that they had put it out of their heads altogether, and that their hasty action now was prompted as much by the shock of being recalled to a consciousness of the troubled state of affairs in the New World as by any real regret for what they had done. Moreover they had sent out Bobadilla to quiet things down; and the first result of it was that Spain was ringing with the scandal of the Admiral's treatment. In that Spanish world, unsteadfast and unstable, when one end of the see-saw was up the other must be down; and it was Columbus who now found himself high up in the heavens of favour, and Bobadilla who was seated in the dust. Equipoise of any kind was apparently a thing impossible; if one man was right the other man must be wrong; no excuses for Bobadilla; every excuse for the Admiral.

The first official act, therefore, was an order for the immediate release of the Admiral and his brothers, followed by an invitation for him to proceed without



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delay to the Court at Granada, and an order for the immediate payment to him of the sum of 2000 ducats<sup>1</sup>—this last no ungenerous gift to a Viceroy whose pearl accounts were in something less than order. Perhaps Columbus had cherished the idea of appearing dramatically before the very Court in his rags and chains; but the cordiality of their letter as well as the gift of money made this impossible. Instead, not being a man to do things by halves, he equipped himself in his richest and most splendid garments, got together the requisite number of squires and pages, and duly presented himself at Granada in his full dignity. The meeting was an affecting one, touched with a humanity which has survived the intervening centuries, as a touch of true humanity will when details of mere parade and etiquette have long perished. Perhaps the Admiral, inspired with a deep sense of his wrongs, meant to preserve a very stiff and cold demeanour at the beginning of this interview; but when he looked into the kind eyes of Isabella and saw them suffused with tears at the thought of his sorrows all his dignity broke down; the tears came to his own eyes, and he wept there naturally like a child. Ferdinand looking on kind but uncomfortable; Isabella unaffectedly touched and weeping; the Admiral, in spite of his scarlet cloak and golden collar and jewelled sword, in spite of equerries, squires, pages and attendants, sobbing on his knees like a child or an old man—these

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to £569 or \$2846. At the present day equivalent to £4552 or \$23,768.



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were the scenes and kindly emotions of this historic moment.

The tears were staunched by kindly royal words and handkerchiefs supplied by attendant pages; sobbings breaking out again, but on the whole soon quieted; King and Queen raising the gouty Christopher from his knees, filling the air with kind words of sympathy, praise, and encouragement; the lonely worn heart, somewhat arid of late, and parched from want of human sympathy, much refreshed by this dew of kindness. The Admiral was soon himself again, and he would not have been himself if upon recovering he had not launched out into what some historians call a "lofty and dignified vindication of his loyalty and zeal." No one, indeed, is better than the Admiral at such lofty and dignified vindications. He goes into the whole matter and sets forth an account of affairs at Española from his own point of view; and can even (so high is the thermometer of favour) safely indulge in a little judicious self-depreciation, saying that if he has erred it has not been from want of zeal but from want of experience in dealing with the kind of material he has been set to govern. All this is very human, natural, and understandable; product of that warm emotional atmosphere, bedewed with tears, in which the Admiral finds himself; and it is not long before the King and Queen, also moved to it by the emotional temperature, are expressing their unbroken and



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unbounded confidence in him and repudiating the acts of Bobadilla, which they declare to have been contrary to their instructions; undertaking also that he shall be immediately dismissed from his post. Poor Bobadilla is not here in the warm emotional atmosphere; he had his turn of it six months ago, when no powers were too high or too delicate to be entrusted to him; he is out in the cold at the other end of the see-saw, which has let him down to the ground with a somewhat sudden thump.

Columbus, relying on the influence of these emotions, made bold to ask that his property in the island should be restored to him, which was immediately granted; and also to request that he should be reinstated in his office of Viceroy and allowed to return at once in triumph to Española. But emotions are unstable things; they present a yielding surface which will give to any extent, but which, when it has hardened again after the tears have evaporated, is often found to be in much the same condition as before. At first promises were made that the whole matter should be fully gone into; but when it came to cold fact, Ferdinand was obliged to recognise that this whole business of discovery and colonisation had become a very different thing to what it had been when Columbus was the only discoverer; and he was obviously of opinion that, as Columbus's office had once been conveniently withdrawn from him, it would only be disastrous to reinstate him in it. Of course he did not say

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so at once; but reasons were given for judicious delay in the Admiral's reappointment. It was represented to him that the colony, being in an extremely unsettled state, should be given a short period of rest, and also that it would be as well for him to wait until the people who had given him so much trouble in the island could be quietly and gradually removed. Two years was the time mentioned as suitable for an interregnum, and it is probable that it was the intention of Isabella, although not of Ferdinand, to restore Columbus to his office at the end of that time.

In the meantime it became necessary to appoint some one to supersede Bobadilla; for the news that arrived periodically from Española during the year 1501 showed that he had entirely failed in his task of reducing the island to order. For the wholesome if unequal rigours of Columbus Bobadilla had substituted laxness and indulgence, with the result that the whole colony was rapidly reduced to a state of the wildest disorder. Vice and cruelty were rampant; in fact the barbarities practised upon the natives were so scandalous that even Spanish opinion, which was never very sympathetic to heathen suffering, was thoroughly shocked and alarmed. The Sovereigns therefore appointed Nicholas de Ovando to go out and take over the command, with instructions to use very drastic means for bringing the colony to order. How he did it we shall presently see; in the meantime all that was known of him (the man not having been



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tried yet) was that he was a poor knight of Calatrava, a man respected in royal circles for the performance of minor official duties, but no very popular favourite; honest according to his lights—lights turned rather low and dim, as was often the case in those days. A narrow-minded man also, without sympathy or imagination, capable of cruelty; a tough, stiff-necked stock of a man, fit to deal with Bobadilla perhaps, but hardly fit to deal with the colony. Spain in those days was not a nursery of administration. Of all the people who were sent out successively to govern Española and supersede one another, the only one who really seems to have had the necessary natural ability, had he but been given the power, was Bartholomew Columbus; but unfortunately things were in such a state that the very name of Columbus was enough to bar a man from acceptance as a governor of Española.

It was not for any lack of powers and equipment that this procession of governors failed in their duties. We have seen with what authority Bobadilla had been entrusted; and Ovando had even greater advantages. The instructions he received showed that the needs of the new colonies were understood by Ferdinand and Isabella, if by no one else. Ovando was not merely appointed Governor of Española but of the whole of the new territory discovered in the west, his seat of government being San Domingo. He was given the necessary free hand in the matters of punishment, confiscation, and allotment of lands. He was to revoke the orders which had been made by Bobadilla reducing the



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proportion of gold payable to the Crown, and was empowered to take over one-third of the gold that was stored on the island, and one-half of what might be found in the future. The Crown was to have a monopoly of all trade, and ordinary supplies were only to be procured through the Crown agent. On the other hand, the natives were to be released from slavery, and although forced to work in the mines, were to be paid for their labour—a distinction which in the working out did not produce much difference. A body of Franciscan monks accompanied Ovando for the purpose of tackling the religious question with the necessary energy; and every regulation that the kind heart of Isabella could think of was made for the happiness and contentment of the Indians.

Unhappily the real mischief had already been done. The natives, who had never been accustomed to hard and regular work under the conditions of commerce and greed, but had only toiled for the satisfaction of their own simple wants, were suffering cruelly under the hard labour in the mines, and the severe driving of their Spanish masters. Under these unnatural conditions the native population was rapidly dying off, and there was some likelihood that there would soon be a scarcity of native labour. These were the circumstances in which the idea of importing black African labour to the New World was first conceived—a plan which was destined to have results so tremendous that we have probably not yet seen their full and ghastly development. There were a great number of African negro slaves at that time in Spain;



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a whole generation of them had been born in slavery in Spain itself; and this generation was bodily imported to Española to relieve and assist the native labour.

These preparations were not made all at once; and it was more than a year after the return of Columbus before Ovando was ready to sail. In the meantime Columbus was living in Granada, and looking on with no very satisfied eye at the plans which were being made to supersede him, and about which he was probably not very much consulted; feeling very sore indeed, and dividing his attention between the nursing of his grievances and other even less wholesome occupations. There was any amount of smiling kindness for him at Court, but very little of the satisfaction that his vanity and ambition craved; and in the absence of practical employment he fell back on visionary speculations. He made great friends at this time with a monk named Gaspar Gorricio, with whose assistance he began to make some kind of a study of such utterances of the Prophets and the Fathers as he conceived to have a bearing on his own career.

Columbus was in fact in a very queer way at this time; and what with his readings and his meditations and his grievances, and his visits to his monkish friend in the convent of Las Cuevas, he fell into a kind of intellectual stupor, of which the work called *Libro de las Profecias*, or Book of the Prophecies, in which he wrote down such considerations as occurred to him in his stupor, was the





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result. The manuscript of this work is in existence, although no human being has ever ventured to reprint the whole of it; and we would willingly abstain from mentioning it here if it were not an undeniable act of Columbus's life. The Admiral, fallen into theological stupor, puts down certain figures upon paper; discovers that St. Augustine said that the world would only last for 7000 years; finds that some other genius had calculated that before the birth of Christ it had existed for 5343 years and 318 days; adds 1501 years from the birth of Christ to his own time; adds up, and finds that the total is 6844 years; subtracts, and discovers that this earthly globe can only last 155 years longer. He remembers also that, still according to the Prophets, certain things must happen before the end of the world; Holy Sepulchre restored to Christianity, heathen converted, second coming of Christ; and decides that he himself is the man appointed by God and promised by the Prophets to perform these works. Good Heavens! in what an entirely dark and sordid stupor is our Christopher now sunk—a veritable slough and quag of stupor out of which, if he does not manage to flounder himself, no human hand can pull him.

But amid his wallowings in this slough of stupor, when all else in him had been well-nigh submerged by it, two dim lights were preserved towards which, although foundered up to the chin, he began to struggle; and by



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superhuman efforts did at last extricate himself from the theological stupor and get himself blown clean again by the salt winds before he died. One light was his religion; not to be confounded with theological stupor, but quite separate from it in my belief; a certain steadfast and consuming faith in a Power that could see and understand and guide him to the accomplishment of his purpose. This faith had been too often a good friend and help to Christopher for him to forget it very long, even while he was staggering in the quag with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Fathers; and gradually, as I say, he worked himself out into the region of activity again. First, thinking it a pity that his flounderings in the slough should be entirely wasted, he had a copy of his precious theological work made and presented it to the Sovereigns, with a letter urging them (since he himself was unable to do it) to undertake a crusade for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre—not an altogether wild proposal in those days. But Ferdinand had other uses for his men and his money, and contented himself with despatching Peter Martyr on a pacific mission to the Grand Soldan of Egypt.

The other light left unquenched in Columbus led him back to the firm ground of maritime enterprise; he began to long for the sea again, and for a chance of doing something to restore his reputation. An infinitely better and more wholesome frame of mind this; by all means let him mend his reputation by achievement, instead of by writing books in a theological trance or stupor, and attempting to prove that he was chosen by the Almighty!



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He now addressed himself to the better task of getting himself chosen by men to do something which should raise him again in their esteem.

His maritime ambition was no doubt stimulated at this time by witnessing the departure of Ovando, in February 1502, with a fleet of thirty-five ships and a company of 2500 people. It was not in the Admiral's nature to look on without envy at an equipment the like of which he himself had never been provided with, and he did not restrain his sarcasms at its pomp and grandeur, nor at the ease with which men could follow a road which had once been pointed out to them. Ovando had a great body-guard such as Columbus had never had; and he also carried with him a great number of picked married men with their families, all with knowledge of some trade or craft, whose presence in the colony would be a guarantee of permanence and steadiness. He perhaps remembered his own crowd of ruffians and gaol-birds, and realised the bitterness of his own mistakes. It was a very painful moment for him, and he was only partially reconciled to it by the issue of a royal order to Ovando under which he was required to see to the restoration of the Admiral's property. If it had been devoted to public purposes it was to be repaid him from the royal funds; but if it had been merely distributed among the colonists Bobadilla was to be made responsible for it. The Admiral was also allowed to send out an agent to represent him and



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look after his interests; and he appointed Alonso de Carvajal to this office.

Ovando once gone, the Admiral could turn again to his own affairs. It is true there were rumours that the whole fleet had perished, for it encountered a gale very soon after leaving Cadiz, and a great quantity of the deck hamper was thrown overboard and was washed on the shores of Spain; and the Sovereigns were so bitterly distressed that, as it is said, they shut themselves up for eight days. News eventually came, however, that only one ship had been lost and that the rest had proceeded safely to San Domingo. Columbus, much recovered in body and mind, now began to apply for a fleet for himself. He had heard of the discovery by the Portuguese of the southern route to India; no doubt he had heard also much gossip of the results of the many private voyages of discovery that were sailing from Spain at this time; and he began to think seriously about his own discoveries and the way in which they might best be extended. He thought much of his voyage to the west of Trinidad and of the strange pent-up seas and currents that he had discovered there. He remembered the continual westward trend of the current, and how all the islands in that sea had their greatest length east and west, as though their shores had been worn into that shape by the constant flowing of the current; and it was not an unnatural conclusion for him

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to suppose that there was a channel far to the west through which these seas poured and which would lead him to the Golden Chersonesus. He put away from him that nightmare madness that he transacted on the coast of Cuba. He knew very well that he had not yet found the Golden Chersonesus and the road to India; but he became convinced that the western current would lead him there if only he followed it long enough. There was nothing insane about this theory; it was in fact a very well-observed and well-reasoned argument; and the fact that it happened to be entirely wrong is no reflection on the Admiral's judgment. The great Atlantic currents at that time had not been studied; and how could he know that the western stream of water was the northern half of a great ocean current which sweeps through the Caribbean Sea, into and round the Gulf of Mexico, and flows out northward past Florida in the Gulf Stream?

His applications for a fleet were favourably received by the King and Queen, but much frowned upon by certain high officials of the Court. They were beginning to regard Columbus as a dangerous adventurer who, although he happened to have discovered the western islands, had brought the Spanish colony there to a dreadful state of disorder; and had also, they alleged, proved himself rather less than trustworthy in matters of treasure. Still in the summer days of 1501 he was making himself very troublesome at Court with constant petitions and letters about his rights and privileges; and Ferdinand was far from unwilling to adopt a plan by which they



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would at least get rid of him and keep him safely occupied at the other side of the world at the cost of a few caravels. There was, besides, always an element of uncertainty. His voyage might come to nothing, but on the other hand the Admiral was no novice at this game of discovery, and one could not tell but that something big might come of it. After some consideration permission was given to him to fit out a fleet of four ships, and he proceeded to Seville in the autumn of 1501 to get his little fleet ready. Bartholomew was to come with him, and his son Ferdinand also, who seems to have much endeared himself to the Admiral in these dark days, and who would surely be a great comfort to him on the voyage. Beatriz Enriquez seems to have passed out of his life; certainly he was not living with her either now or on his last visit to Spain; one way or another, that business is at an end for him. Perhaps poor Beatriz, seeing her son in such a high place at Court, has effaced herself for his sake; perhaps the appointment was given on condition of such effacement; we do not know.

Columbus was in no hurry over his preparations. In the midst of them he found time to collect a whole series of documents relating to his titles and dignities, which he had copied and made into a great book which he called his "Book of Privileges," and the copies of which were duly attested before a notary at Seville on January 5, 1502. He wrote many letters to various

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friends of his, chiefly in relation to these privileges; not interesting or illuminating letters to us, although very important to busy Christopher when he wrote them. Here is one written to Nicolo Oderigo, a Genoese Ambassador who came to Spain on a brief mission in the spring of 1502, and who, with certain other residents in Spain, is said to have helped Columbus in his preparations for his fourth voyage:—

“SIR,—The loneliness in which you have left us cannot be described. I gave the book containing my writings to Francisco de Rivarol that he may send it to you with another copy of letters containing instructions. I beg you to be so kind as to write Don Diego in regard to the place of security in which you put them. Duplicates of everything will be completed and sent to you in the same manner and by the same Francisco. Among them you will find a new document. Their Highnesses promised to give all that belongs to me and to place Don Diego in possession of everything, as you will see. I wrote to Señor Juan Luis and to Señora Catalina. The letter accompanies this one. I am ready to start in the name of the Holy Trinity as soon as the weather is good. I am well provided with everything. If Jeronimo de Santi Esteban is coming, he must await me and not embarrass himself with anything, for they will take away from him all they can and silently leave him. Let him come here and the King and the Queen will receive him until I come. May our Lord have you in His holy keeping.

“Done at Seville, March 21, 1502.

“At your command.

.S.  
.S.A.S.  
X M Y  
Xpo FERENS.”



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His delays were not pleasing to Ferdinand, who wanted to get rid of him, and he was invited to hurry his departure; but he still continued to go deliberately about his affairs, which he tried to put in order as far as he was able, since he thought it not unlikely that he might never see Spain again. Thinking thus of his worldly duties, and his thoughts turning to his native Genoa, it occurred to him to make some benefaction out of the riches that were coming to him by which his name might be remembered and held in honour there. This was a piece of practical kindness the record of which is most precious to us; for it shows the Admiral in a truer and more human light than he often allowed to shine upon him. The tone of the letter is nothing; he could not forbear letting the people of Genoa see how great he was. The devotion of his legacy to the reduction of the tax on simple provisions was a genuine charity, much to be appreciated by the dwellers in the Vico Dritto di Ponticello, where wine and provision shops were so very necessary to life. The letter was written to the Directors of the famous Bank of Saint George at Genoa.

“VERY NOBLE LORDS,—Although my body is here, my heart is continually yonder. Our Lord has granted me the greatest favour he has granted any one since the time of David. The results of my undertaking already shine, and they would make a great light if the obscurity of the Government did not conceal them. I shall go again to the Indies in the name of the Holy Trinity, to return immediately. And as I am mortal, I desire my son Don Diego to give to



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you each year, for ever, the tenth part of all the income received, in payment of the tax on wheat, wine, and other provisions. If this tenth amounts to anything, receive it, and if not, receive my will for the deed. I beg you as a favour to have this son of mine in your charge. Nicolo de Oderigo knows more about my affairs than I myself. I have sent him the copy of my privileges and letters, that he may place them in safe keeping. I would be glad if you could see them. The King and the Queen, my Lords, now wish to honour me more than ever. May the Holy Trinity guard your noble persons, and increase the importance of your very magnificent office.

“Done in Seville, April 2, 1502.

“The High-Admiral of the Ocean-Sea and Viceroy and Governor-General of the islands and mainland of Asia and the Indies, belonging to the King and Queen, my Lords, and the Captain-General of the Sea, and a Member of their Council.

.S.  
.S.A.S.  
X M Y  
Xpo FERENS.”

Columbus was anxious to touch at Española on his voyage to the West; but he was expressly forbidden to do so, as it was known that his presence there could not make for anything but confusion; he was to be permitted, however, to touch there on his return journey. The Great Khan was not out of his mind yet; much in it apparently, for he took an Arabian interpreter with him so that he could converse with that monarch. In fact he did not hesitate to announce that very big results indeed were to come of this voyage of his; among other things he expected to circumnavigate the globe,



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and made no secret of his expectation. In the meantime he was expected to find some pearls in order to pay for the equipment of his fleet; and in consideration of what had happened to the last lot of pearls collected by him, an agent named Diego de Porras was sent along with him to keep an account of the gold and precious stones which might be discovered. Special instructions were issued to Columbus about the disposal of these commodities. He does not seem to have minded these somewhat humiliating precautions; he had a way of rising above petty indignities and refusing to recognise them which must have been of great assistance to his self-respect in certain troubled moments in his life.

His delays, however, were so many that in March 1502 the Sovereigns were obliged to order him to depart without any more waiting. Poor Christopher, who once had to sue for the means with which to go, whose departures were once the occasion of so much state and ceremony, has now to be hustled forth and asked to go away. Still he does not seem to mind; once more, as of old, his gaze is fixed beyond the horizon and his mind is filled with one idea. They may not think much of him in Spain now, but they will when he comes back; and he can afford to wait. Completing his preparations without undignified haste he despatched Bartholomew with his four little vessels from Seville to Cadiz, where the Admiral was to join them. He took farewell of his son Diego and of his brother James; good friendly James, who had done his best in a difficult position, but had seen quite



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enough of the wild life of the seas and was now settled in Seville studying hard for the Church. It had always been his ambition, poor James; and, studying hard in Seville, he did in time duly enter the sacred pale and become a priest—by which we may see that if our ambitions are only modest enough we may in time encompass them. Sometimes I think that James, enveloped in priestly vestments, nodding in the sanctuary, lulled by the muttering murmur of the psalms or dozing through a long *credo*, may have thought himself back amid the brilliant sunshine and strange perfumes of Española; and from a dream of some nymph hiding in the sweet groves of the Vega may have awakened with a sigh to the strident Alleluias of his brother priests. At any rate, farewell to James, safely seated beneath the Gospel light, and continuing to sit there until, in the year 1515, death interrupts him. We are not any more concerned with James in his priestly shelter, but with those elder brothers of his who are making ready again to face the sun and the surges.

Columbus's ships were on the point of sailing when word came that the Moors were besieging a Portuguese post on the coast of Morocco, and, as civility was now the order of the day between Spain and Portugal, the Admiral was instructed to call on his way there and afford some relief. This he did, sailing from Cadiz on the 9th or 10th of May to Ercilla on the Morocco coast, where




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he anchored on the 13th. But the Moors had all departed and the siege was over; so Columbus, having sent Bartholomew and some of his officers ashore on a civil visit, which was duly returned, set out the same day on his last voyage.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LAST VOYAGE

THE four ships that made up the Admiral's fleet on his fourth and last voyage were all small caravels, the largest only of seventy tons and the smallest only of fifty. Columbus chose for his flagship the *Capitana*, seventy tons, appointing Diego Tristan to be his captain. The next best ship was the *Santiago de Palos* under the command of Francisco Porras; Porras and his brother Diego having been more or less foisted on to Columbus by Morales, the Royal Treasurer, who wished to find berths for these two brothers-in-law of his. We shall hear more of the Porras brothers. The third ship was the *Gallega*, sixty tons, a very bad sailer indeed, and on that account entrusted to Bartholomew Columbus, whose skill in navigation, it was hoped, might make up for her bad sailing qualities. Bartholomew had, to tell the truth, had quite enough of the New World, but he was too loyal to Christopher to let him go alone, knowing as he did his precarious state of health and his tendency to despondency. The captain of the *Gallega* was Pedro de Terreros, who had sailed with the Admiral as steward on all his other voyages and was now promoted to a command. The fourth ship was called the *Vizcaina*,



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fifty tons, and was commanded by Bartolomé Fieschi, a friend of Columbus's from Genoa, and a very sound, honourable man. There were altogether 143 souls on board the four caravels.

The fleet as usual made the Canary Islands, where they arrived on the 20th of May, and stopped for five days taking in wood and water and fresh provisions. Columbus was himself again—always more himself at sea than anywhere else; he was following a now familiar road that had no difficulties or dangers for him; and there is no record of the voyage out except that it was quick and prosperous, with the trade wind blowing so steadily that from the time they left the Canaries until they made land twenty days later they had hardly to touch a sheet or a halliard. The first land they made was the island of Martinique, where wood and water were taken in and the men sent ashore to wash their linen. To young Ferdinand, but fourteen years old, this voyage was like a fairy tale come true, and his delight in everything that he saw must have added greatly to Christopher's pleasure and interest in the voyage. They only stayed a few days at Martinique and then sailed westward along the chain of islands until they came to Porto Rico, where they put in to the sunny harbour which they had discovered on a former voyage.

It was at this point that Columbus determined, contrary to his precise orders, to stand across to Española. The place attracted him like a magnet; he could not keep away from it; and although he had a good enough excuse

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for touching there, it is probable that his real reason was a very natural curiosity to see how things were faring with his old enemy Bobadilla. The excuse was that the *Gallega*, Bartholomew's ship, was so unseaworthy as to be a drag on the progress of the rest of the fleet and a danger to her own crew. In the slightest sea-way she rolled almost gunwale under, and would not carry her sail; and Columbus's plan was to exchange her for a vessel out of the great fleet which he knew had by this time reached Española and discharged its passengers.

He arrived off the harbour of San Domingo on the 29th of June in very threatening weather, and immediately sent Pedro de Terreros ashore with a message to Ovando, asking to be allowed to purchase or exchange one of the vessels that were riding in the harbour, and also leave to shelter his own vessels there during the hurricane which he believed to be approaching. A message came back that he was neither permitted to buy a ship nor to enter the harbour; warning him off from San Domingo, in fact.

With this unfavourable message Terreros also brought back the news of the island. Ovando had been in San Domingo since the 15th of April, and had found the island in a shocking state, the Spanish population having to a man devoted itself to idleness, profligacy, and slave-driving. The only thing that had prospered was the gold-mining; for owing to the licence that Bobadilla had given to the



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Spaniards to employ native labour to an unlimited extent there had been an immense amount of gold taken from the mines. But in no other respect had island affairs prospered, and Ovando immediately began the usual investigation. The fickle Spaniards, always unfaithful to whoever was in authority over them, were by this time tired of Bobadilla, in spite of his leniency, and they hailed the coming of Ovando and his numerous equipment with enthusiasm. Bobadilla had also by this time, we may suppose, had enough of the joys of office; at any rate he showed no resentment at the coming of the new Governor, and handed over the island with due ceremony. The result of the investigation of Ovando, however, was to discover a state of things requiring exemplary treatment; friend Roldan was arrested, with several of his allies, and put on board one of the ships to be sent back to Spain for trial. The cacique Guarionex, who had been languishing in San Domingo in chains for a long time, was also embarked on one of the returning ships; and about eighteen hundredweights of gold which had been collected were also stowed into cases and embarked. Among this gold there was a nugget weighing 35 lbs. which had been found by a native woman in a river, and which Ovando was sending home as a personal offering to his Sovereigns; and some further 40 lbs. of gold belonging to Columbus, which Carvajal had recovered and placed in a caravel to be taken to Spain for the Admiral. The ships were all ready to sail, and were anchored off the mouth of the river when Columbus arrived in San Domingo.





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When he found that he was not to be allowed to enter the harbour himself Columbus sent a message to Ovando warning him that a hurricane was coming on, and begging him to take measures for the safety of his large fleet. This, however, was not done, and the fleet put to sea that evening. It had only got so far as the eastern end of Española when the hurricane, as predicted by Columbus, duly came down in the manner of West Indian hurricanes, a solid wall of wind and an advancing wave of the sea which submerged everything in its path. Columbus's little fleet, finding shelter denied them, had moved a little way along the coast, the Admiral standing close in shore, the others working to the south for sea-room; and although they survived the hurricane they were scattered, and only met several days later, in an extremely battered condition, at the westerly end of the island. But the large home-going fleet had not survived. The hurricane, which was probably from the north-east, struck them just as they lost the lee of the island, and many of them, including the ships with the treasure of gold and the caravels bearing Roldan, Bobadilla, and Guarionex, all went down at once and were never seen or heard of again. Other ships survived for a little while only to founder in the end; a few, much shattered, crept back to the shelter of San Domingo; but only one, it is said, survived the hurricane so well as to be able to proceed to Spain; and that was the one which carried Carvajal and Columbus's little property of gold. The Admiral's luck again; or the intervention of the Holy Trinity—whichever you like.

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After the shattering experience of the storm, Columbus, although he did not return to San Domingo, remained for some time on the coast of Española repairing his ships and resting his exhausted crews. There were threatenings of another storm which delayed them still further, and it was not until the middle of July that the Admiral was able to depart on the real purpose of his voyage. His object was to strike the mainland far to the westward of the Gulf of Paria, and so by following it back eastward to find the passage which he believed to exist. But the winds and currents were very baffling; he was four days out of sight of land after touching at an island north of Jamaica; and finally, in some bewilderment, he altered his course more and more northerly until he found his whereabouts by coming in sight of the archipelago off the south-western end of Cuba which he had called the Gardens. From here he took a departure south-west, and on the 30th of July came in sight of a small island off the northern coast of Honduras which he called Isla de Pinos, and from which he could see the hills of the mainland. At this island he found a canoe of immense size with a sort of house or caboose built amidships, in which was established a cacique with his family and dependents; and the people in the canoe showed signs of more advanced civilisation than any seen by Columbus before in these waters. They wore clothing, they had copper hatchets, and bells, and palm-wood swords in the edges of which were set sharp blades of flint. They had a fermented liquor, a kind of maize beer which looked like English



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ale ; they had some kind of money or medium of exchange also, and they told the Admiral that there was land to the west where all these things existed and many more. It is strange and almost inexplicable that he did not follow this trail to the westward ; if he had done so he would have discovered Mexico. But one thing at a time always occupied him to the exclusion of everything else ; his thoughts were now turned to the eastward, where he supposed the Straits were ; and the significance of this canoe full of natives was lost upon him.

They crossed over to the mainland of Honduras on August 15th, Bartholomew landing and attending mass on the beach as the Admiral himself was too ill to go ashore. Three days later the cross and banner of Castile were duly erected on the shores of the Rio Tinto and the country was formally annexed. The natives were friendly, and supplied the ships with provisions ; but they were very black and ugly, and Columbus readily believed the assertion of his native guide that they were cannibals. They continued their course to the eastward, but as the gulf narrowed the force of the west-going current was felt more severely. Columbus, believing that the strait which he sought lay to the eastward, laboured against the current, and his difficulties were increased by the bad weather which he now encountered. There were squalls and hurricanes, tempests and cross-currents that knocked his frail ships about and almost swamped them. Anchors and gear were lost, the sails were torn out of the bolt-ropes, timbers were strained ; and for six weeks this state



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of affairs went on to an accompaniment of thunder and lightning which added to the terror and discomfort of the mariners.

This was in August and the first half of September—six weeks of the worst weather that Columbus had ever experienced. It was the more unfortunate that his illness made it impossible for him to get actively about the ship; and he had to have a small cabin or tent rigged up on deck, in which he could lie and direct the navigation. It is bad enough to be as ill as he was in a comfortable bed ashore; it is a thousand times worse amid the discomforts of a small boat at sea; but what must it have been thus to have one's sick-bed on the deck of a cockle-shell which was being buffeted and smashed in unknown seas, and to have to think and act not for oneself alone but for the whole of a suffering little fleet! No wonder the Admiral's distress of mind was great; but oddly enough his anxieties, as he recorded them in a letter, were not so much on his own account as on behalf of others. The terrified seamen making vows to the Virgin and promises of pilgrimages between their mad rushes to the sheets and furious clinging and hauling; his son Ferdinand, who was only fourteen, but who had to endure the same pain and fatigue as the rest of them, and who was enduring it with such pluck that "it was as if he had been at sea eighty years"; the dangers of Bartholomew, who had not wanted to come on this voyage at all, but was now in the thick of it in the worst ship of the squadron, and fighting for his life



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amid tempests and treacherous seas; Diego at home, likely to be left an orphan and at the mercy of fickle and doubtful friends—these were the chief causes of the Admiral's anxiety. All he said about himself was that "by my misfortune the twenty years of service which I gave with so much fatigue and danger have profited me so little that to-day I have in Castile no roof, and if I wished to dine or sup or sleep I have only the tavern for my last refuge, and for that, most of the time, I would be unable to pay the score." Not cheerful reflections, these, to add to the pangs of acute gout and the consuming anxieties of seamanship under such circumstances. Dreadful to him, these things, but not dreadful to us; for they show us an Admiral restored to his true temper and vocation, something of the old sea hero breaking out in him at last through all these misfortunes, like the sun through the hurrying clouds of a stormy afternoon.

Forty days of passage through this wilderness of water were endured before the sea-worn mariners, rounding a cape on September 12th, saw stretching before them to the southward a long coast of plain and mountain which they were able to follow with a fair wind. Gradually the sea went down; the current which had opposed them here aided them, and they were able to recover a little from the terrible strain of the last six weeks. The cape was called by Columbus Gracios de Dios; and on the



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16th of September they landed at the entrance to a river to take in water. The boat which was sent ashore, however, capsized on the sandy bar of the entrance, two men being drowned, and the river was given the name of Rio de Desastre. They found a better anchorage, where they rested for ten days, overhauled their stores, and had some intercourse with the natives and exploration on shore. Some incidents occurred which can best be described in the Admiral's own language as he recorded them in his letter to the Sovereigns.

“. . . When I reached there, they immediately sent me two young girls dressed in rich garments. The older one might not have been more than eleven years of age and the other seven; both with so much experience, so much manner, and so much appearance as would have been sufficient if they had been public women for twenty years. They bore with them magic powder and other things belonging to their art. When they arrived I gave orders that they should be adorned with our things and sent them immediately ashore. There I saw a tomb within the mountain as large as a house and finely worked with great artifice, and a corpse stood thereon uncovered, and, looking within it, it seemed as if he stood upright. Of the other arts they told me that there was excellence. Great and little animals are there in quantities, and very different from ours; among which I saw boars of frightful form so that a dog of the Irish breed dared not face them. With a cross-bow I had wounded an animal which exactly resembles a baboon only that it was much larger and has a face like a human being. I had pierced it with an arrow from one side to the other, entering in the breast and going out near the tail, and because it was very ferocious I cut off one of the fore feet which rather seemed to be a hand, and one of the hind feet.



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The boars seeing this commenced to set up their bristles and fled with great fear, seeing the blood of the other animal. When I saw this I caused to be thrown them the 'uegare,'<sup>1</sup> certain animals they call so, where it stood, and approaching him, near as he was to death, and the arrow still sticking in his body, he wound his tail around his snout and held it fast, and with the other hand which remained free, seized him by the neck as an enemy. This act, so magnificent and novel, together with the fine country and hunting of wild beasts, made me write this to your Majesties."

The natives at this anchorage of Cariari were rather suspicious, but Columbus seized two of them to act as guides in his journey further down the coast. Weighing anchor on October 5th he worked along the Costa Rica shore, which here turns to the eastward again, and soon found a tribe of natives who wore large ornaments of gold. They were reluctant to part with the gold, but as usual pointed down the coast and said that there was much more gold there; they even gave a name to the place where the gold could be found—Veragua; and for once this country was found to have a real existence. The fleet anchored there on October 17th, being greeted by defiant blasts of conch shells and splashing of water from the indignant natives. Business was done, however: seventeen gold discs in exchange for three hawks' bells.

Still Columbus went on in pursuit of his geographical chimera; even gold had no power to detain him from the earnest search for this imaginary strait. Here and there along the coast he saw increasing signs of civilisation—once

<sup>1</sup> Peccary.



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a wall built of mud and stone, which made him think of Cathay again. He now got it into his head that the region he was in was ten days' journey from the Ganges, and that it was surrounded by water; which if it means anything means that he thought he was on a large island ten days' sail to the eastward of the coast of India. Altogether at sea as to the facts, poor Admiral, but with heart and purpose steadfast and right enough.

They sailed a little farther along the coast, now between narrow islands that were like the streets of Genoa, where the boughs of trees on either hand brushed the shrouds of the ships; now past harbours where there were native fairs and markets, and where natives were to be seen mounted on horses and armed with swords; now by long, lonely stretches of the coast where there was nothing to be seen but the low green shore with the mountains behind and the alligators basking at the river mouths. At last (November 2nd) they arrived at the cape known as Nombre de Dios, which Ojeda had reached some time before in his voyage to the West.

The coast of the mainland had thus been explored from the Bay of Honduras to Brazil, and Columbus was obliged to admit that there was no strait. Having satisfied himself of that he decided to turn back to Veragua, where he had seen the natives smelting gold, in order to make some arrangement for establishing a colony there. The wind, however, which had headed him almost all the way on his easterly voyage, headed him again now and began to blow steadily from the west. He started on his return journey





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on the 5th of December, and immediately fell into almost worse troubles than he had been in before. The wood of the ships had been bored through and through by sea-worms, so that they leaked very badly; the crews were sick, provisions were spoilt, biscuits rotten. Young Ferdinand Columbus, if he did not actually make notes of this voyage at the time, preserved a very lively recollection of it, and it is to his *Historie*, which in its earlier passages is of doubtful authenticity, that we owe some of the most human touches of description relating to this voyage. Any passage in his work relating to food or animals at this time has the true ring of boyish interest and observation, and is in sharp contrast to the second-hand and artificial tone of the earlier chapters of his book. About the incident of the howling monkey, which the Admiral's Irish hound would not face, Ferdinand remarks that it "frighted a good dog that we had, but frightened one of our wild boars a great deal more"; and as to the condition of the biscuits when they turned westward again, he says that they were "so full of weevils that, as God shall help me, I saw many that stayed till night to eat their sop for fear of seeing them."

After experiencing some terrible weather, in the course of which they had been obliged to catch sharks for food and had once been nearly overwhelmed by a waterspout, they entered a harbour where, in the words of young Ferdinand, "we saw the people living like birds in the tops of the trees, laying sticks across from bough to bough and building their huts upon them; and though





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we knew not the reason of the custom we guessed that it was done for fear of their enemies, or of the griffins that are in this island." After further experiences of bad weather they made what looked like a suitable harbour on the coast of Veragua, which harbour, as they entered it on the day of the Epiphany (January 9, 1503), they named Belem or Bethlehem. The river in the mouth of which they were anchored, however, was subject to sudden spouts and gushes of water from the hills, one of which occurred on January 24th and nearly swamped the caravels. This spout of water was caused by the rainy season, which had begun in the mountains and presently came down to the coast, where it rained continuously until the 14th of February. They had made friends with the Quibian or chief of the country, and he had offered to conduct them to the place where the gold mines were; so Bartholomew was sent off in the rain with a boat party to find this territory. It turned out afterwards that the cunning Quibian had taken them out of his own country and showed them the gold mines of a neighbouring chief, which were not so rich as his own.

Columbus, left idle in the absence of Bartholomew, listening to the continuous drip and patter of the rain on the leaves and the water, begins to dream again—to dream of gold and geography. Remembers that David left three thousand quintals of gold from the Indies to Solomon for the decoration of the Temple; remembers that Josephus said it came from the Golden Chersonesus;



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decides that enough gold could never have been got from the mines of Hayna in Española; and concludes that the Ophir of Solomon must be here in Veragua and not there in Española. It was always here and now with Columbus; and as he moved on his weary sea pilgrimages these mythical lands with their glittering promise moved about with him, like a pillar of fire leading him through the dark night of his quest.

The rain came to an end, however, the sun shone out again, and activity took the place of dreams with Columbus and with his crew. He decided to found a settlement in this place, and to make preparations for seizing and working the gold mines. It was decided to leave a garrison of eighty men, and the business of unloading the necessary arms and provisions and building houses ashore was immediately begun. Hawks' bells and other trifles were widely distributed among the natives, with special toys and delicacies for the Quibian, in order that friendly relations might be established from the beginning; and special regulations were framed to prevent the possibility of any recurrence of the disasters that overtook the settlers of Isabella.

Such are the orderly plans of Columbus; but the Quibian has his plans too, which are found to be of quite a different nature. The Quibian does not like intruders, though he likes their hawks' bells well enough; he is not quite so innocent as poor Guacanagari and the



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rest of them were; he knows that gold is a thing coveted by people to whom it does not belong, and that trouble follows in its train. Quibian therefore decides that Columbus and his followers shall be exterminated—news of which intention fortunately came to the ears of Columbus in time, Diego Mendez and Rodrigo de Escobar having boldly advanced into the Quibian's village and seen the warlike preparations. Bartholomew, returning from his visit to the gold mines, was informed of this state of affairs. Always quick to strike, Bartholomew immediately started with an armed force, and advanced upon the village so rapidly that the savages were taken by surprise, their headquarters surrounded, and the Quibian and fifty of his warriors captured. Bartholomew triumphantly marched the prisoners back, the Quibian being entrusted to the charge of Juan Sanchez, who was rowing him in a little boat. The Quibian complained that his bonds were hurting him, and foolish Sanchez eased them a little; Quibian, with a quick movement, wriggled overboard and dived to the bottom; came up again somewhere and reached home alive. No one saw him come up, however, and they thought he had been drowned.

Columbus now made ready to depart, and the caravels having been got over the shallow bar, their loading was completed and they were ready to sail. On April 6th Diego Tristan was sent in charge of a boat with a message to Bartholomew, who was to be left in command of the settlement; but when Tristan had rounded the point at the entrance to the river and come in sight of the shore



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he had an unpleasant surprise; the settlement was being savagely attacked by the resurrected Quibian and his followers. The fight had lasted for three hours, and had been going badly against the Spaniards, when Bartholomew and Diego Mendes rallied a little force round them and, calling to Columbus's Irish dog which had been left with them, made a rush upon the savages and so terrified them that they scattered. Bartholomew with eight of the other Spaniards was wounded, and one was killed; and it was at this point that Tristan's boat arrived at the settlement. Having seen the fight safely over, he went on up the river to get water, although he was warned that it was not safe; and sure enough, at a point a little farther up the river, beyond some low green arm of the shore, he met with a sudden and bloody death. A cloud of yelling savages surrounded his boat hurling javelins and arrows, and only one seaman, who managed to dive into the water and crawl ashore, escaped to bring the evil tidings.

The Spaniards under Bartholomew's command broke into a panic, and taking advantage of his wounded condition they tried to make sail on their caravel and join the ships of Columbus outside; but since the time of the rains the river had so much gone down that she was stuck fast in the sand. They could not even get a boat over the bar, for there was a heavy cross sea breaking on it; and in the meantime here they were, trapped inside this river, the air resounding with dismal blasts of the natives' conch-shells, and the natives themselves



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dancing round and threatening to rush their position; while the bodies of Tristan and his little crew were to be seen floating down the stream, feasted upon by a screaming cloud of birds. The position of the shore party was desperate, and it was only by the greatest efforts that the wounded Adelantado managed to rally his crew and get them to remove their little camp to an open place on the shore, where a kind of stockade was made of chests, casks, spars, and the caravel's boat. With this for cover, the Spanish fire-arms, so long as there was ammunition for them, were enough to keep the natives at bay.

Outside the bar, in his anchorage beyond the green wooded point, the Admiral meanwhile was having an anxious time. One supposes the entrance to the river to have been complicated by shoals and patches of broken water extending some considerable distance, so that the Admiral's anchorage would be ten or twelve miles away from the camp ashore, and of course entirely hidden from it. As day after day passed and Diego Tristan did not return, the Admiral's anxiety increased. Among the three caravels that now formed his little squadron there was only one boat remaining, the others, not counting one taken by Tristan and one left with Bartholomew, having all been smashed in the late hurricanes. In the heavy sea that was running on the bar the Admiral dared not risk his last remaining boat; but in the mean-





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time he was cut off from all news of the shore party and deprived of any means of finding out what had happened to Tristan. And presently to these anxieties was added a further disaster. It will be remembered that when the Quibian had been captured fifty natives had been taken with him; and these were confined in the forecastle of the *Capitana* and covered by a large hatch, on which most of the crew slept at night. But one night the natives collected a heap of big stones from the ballast of the ship, and piled them up to a kind of platform beneath the hatch; some of the strongest of them got upon the platform and set their backs horizontally against the hatch, gave a great heave and lifted it off. In the confusion that followed, a great many of the prisoners escaped into the sea, and swam ashore; the rest were captured and thrust back under the hatch, which was chained down; but when on the following morning the Spaniards went to attend to this remnant it was found that they had all hanged themselves.

This was a great disaster, since it increased the danger of the garrison ashore, and destroyed all hope of friendship with the natives. There was something terrible and powerful, too, in the spirit of people who could thus to a man make up their minds either to escape or die; and the Admiral must have felt that he was in the presence of strange, powerful elements that were far beyond his control. At any moment, moreover, the wind might change and put him on a lee shore, or force him to seek safety in sea-room; in which case the position of Bartho-

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lomew would be a very critical one. It was while things were at this apparent deadlock that a brave fellow, Pedro Ledesma, offered to attempt to swim through the surf if the boat would take him to the edge of it. Brave Pedro, his offer accepted, makes the attempt; plunges into the boiling surf, and with mighty efforts succeeds in reaching the shore; and after an interval is seen by his comrades, who are waiting with their boat swinging on the edge of the surf, to be returning to them; plunges into the sea, comes safely through the surf again, and is safely hauled on board, having accomplished a very real and satisfactory bit of service.

The story he had to tell the Admiral was as we know not a pleasant one—Tristan and his men dead, several of Bartholomew's force, including the Adelantado himself, wounded, and all in a state of panic and fear at the hostile natives. The Spaniards would do nothing to make the little fortress safer, and were bent only on escaping from the place of horror. Some of them were preparing canoes in which to come out to the ships when the sea should go down, as their one small boat was insufficient; and they swore that if the Admiral would not take them they would seize their own caravel and sail out themselves into the unknown sea as soon as they could get her floated over the bar, rather than remain in such a dreadful situation. Columbus was in a very bad way. He could not desert Bartholomew, as that would expose him to the treachery of his own men and the hostility of the savages. He could not



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reinforce him, except by remaining himself with the whole of his company; and in that case there would be no means of sending the news of his rich discovery to Spain. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to break up the settlement and return some other time with a stronger force sufficient to occupy the country. And even this course had its difficulties; for the weather continued bad, the wind was blowing on to the shore, the sea was so rough as to make the passage of the bar impossible, and any change for the worse in the weather would probably drive his own crazy ships ashore and cut off all hope of escape.

The Admiral, whose health was now permanently broken, and who only had respite from his sufferings in fine weather and when he was relieved from a burden of anxieties such as had been continually pressing on him now for three months, fell into his old state of sleeplessness, feverishness, and consequent depression; and in these circumstances it is not wonderful that the firm ground of fact began to give a little beneath him and that his feet began to sink again into the mire or quag of stupor. Of these further floundering in the quag he himself wrote an account to the King and Queen, so we may as well have it in his own words.

“ I mounted to the top of the ship crying out with a weak voice, weeping bitterly, to the commanders of your Majesties’ army, and calling again to the four winds to help; but they did not answer me. Tired out, I fell asleep and sighing I heard a voice very full of pity which spoke these words :



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*O fool! and slow to believe and to serve Him, thy God and the God of all. What did He more for Moses? and for David His servant? Since thou wast born He had always so great care for thee. When He saw thee in an age with which He was content He made thy name sound marvellously through the world. The Indies, which are so rich a part of the world, He has given to thee as thine. Thou hast distributed them wherever it has pleased thee; He gave thee power so to do. Of the bonds of the ocean which were locked with so strong chains He gave thee the keys, and thou wast obeyed in all the land, and among the Christians thou hast acquired a good and honourable reputation. What did He more for the people of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt? or yet for David, whom from being a shepherd He made King of Judea? Turn to Him and recognise thine error, for His mercy is infinite. Thine old age will be no hindrance to all great things. Many very great inheritances are in His power. Abraham was more than one hundred years old when he begat Isaac and also Sarah was not young. Thou art calling for uncertain aid. Answer me, who has afflicted thee so much and so many times—God or the world? The privileges and promises which God makes He never breaks to any one; nor does He say after having received the service that His intention was not so and it is to be understood in another manner: nor imposes martyrdom to give proof of His power. He abides by the letter of His word. All that He promises He abundantly accomplishes. This is His way. I have told thee what the Creator hath done for thee and does for all. Now He shows me the reward and payment of thy suffering and which thou hast passed in the service of others. And thus half dead, I heard everything; but I could never find an answer to make to words so certain, and only I wept for my errors. He, whoever he might be, finished speaking, saying: *Trust and fear not, for thy tribulations are written in marble and not without reason.*"*

Mere darkness of stupor; not much to be deciphered from it, nor any profitable comment to be made on it,



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except that it was our poor Christopher's way of crying out his great suffering and misery. We must not notice it, much as we should like to hold out a hand of sympathy and comfort to him; must not pay much attention to this dark eloquent nonsense—merely *words*, in which the Admiral never does himself justice. Acts are his true conversation; and when he speaks in that language all men must listen.



## CHAPTER IV

### HEROIC ADVENTURES BY LAND AND SEA

**N**O man ever had a better excuse for his superstitions than the Admiral; no sooner had he got done with his Vision than the wind dropped, the sun came out, the sea fell, and communication with the land was restored. While he had been sick and dreaming one of his crew, Diego Mendez, had been busy with practical efforts in preparation for this day of fine weather; he had made a great raft out of Indian canoes lashed together, with mighty sacks of sail-cloth into which the provisions might be bundled; and as soon as the sea had become calm enough he took this raft in over the bar to the settlement ashore, and began the business of embarking the whole of the stores and ammunition of Bartholomew's garrison. By this practical method the whole establishment was transferred from the shore to the ships in the space of two days, and nothing was left but the caravel, which it was found impossible to float again. It was heavy work towing the raft constantly backwards and forwards from the ships to the shore, but Diego Mendez had the satisfaction of being the last man to embark from the deserted settlement, and to see that not an ounce of stores or ammunition had been lost.



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Columbus, always quick to reward the services of a good man, kissed Diego Mendez publicly on both cheeks, and (what doubtless pleased him much better) gave him command of the caravel of which poor Tristan had been the captain.

With a favourable wind they sailed from this accursed shore at the end of April 1503. It is strange, as Winsor points out, that in the name of this coast should be preserved the only territorial remembrance of Columbus, and that his descendant the Duke of Veragua should in his title commemorate one of the most unfortunate of the Admiral's adventures. And if any one should desire a proof of the utterly misleading nature of most of Columbus's writings about himself, let him know that a few months later he solemnly wrote to the Sovereigns concerning this very place that "there is not in the world a country whose inhabitants are more timid; and the whole place is capable of being easily put into a state of defence. Your people that may come here, if they should wish to become masters of the products of other lands, will have to take them by force or retire empty-handed. In this country they will simply have to trust their persons in the hands of the savages." The facts being that the inhabitants were extremely fierce and warlike and irreconcilably hostile; that the river was a trap out of which in the dry season there was no escape, and the harbour outside a mere shelterless lee shore; that it would require an army and an armada to hold the place against the natives, and that any one who trusted himself in their hands would



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share the fate of the unhappy Diego Tristan. One may choose between believing that the Admiral's memory had entirely failed him (although he had not been backward in making a minute record of all his sufferings) or that he was craftily attempting to deceive the Sovereigns. My own belief is that he was neither trying to deceive anybody nor that he had forgotten anything, but that he was simply incapable of uttering the bare truth when he had a pen in his hand.

From their position on the coast of Veragua Española bore almost due north; but Columbus was too good a seaman to attempt to make the island by sailing straight for it. He knew that the steady west-going current would set him far down on his course, and he therefore decided to work up the coast a long way to the eastward before standing across for Española. The crew grumbled very much at this proceeding, which they did not understand; in fact they argued from it that the Admiral was making straight for Spain, and this, in the crazy condition of the vessels, naturally alarmed them. But in his old high-handed, secret way the Admiral told them nothing; he even took away from the other captains all the charts that they had made of this coast, so that no one but himself would be able to find the way back to it; and he took a kind of pleasure in the complete mystification thus produced on his fellow-voyagers. "None of them could explain whither I went nor whence I came; they





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did not know the way to return thither," he writes, somewhat childishly.

But he was not back in Española yet, and his means for getting there were crumbling away beneath his feet. One of the three remaining caravels was entirely riddled by sea-worms and had to be abandoned at the harbour called Puerto Bello; and the company was crowded on to two ships. The men now became more than ever discontented at the easterly course, and on May 1st, when he had come as far east as the Gulf of Darien, Columbus felt obliged to bear away to the north, although as it turned out he had not nearly made enough easting. He stood on this course for nine days, the west-going current setting him down all the time; and the first land that he made, on May 10th, was the group of islands off the western end of Cuba which he had called the Queen's Gardens.

He anchored for six days here, as the crews were completely exhausted; the ships' stores were reduced to biscuits, oil, and vinegar; the vessels leaked like sieves, and the pumps had to be kept going continually. And no sooner had they anchored than a hurricane came on, and brought up a sea so heavy that the Admiral was convinced that his ships could not live within it. We have got so accustomed to reading of storms and tempests that it seems useless to try and drive home the horror and terror of them; but here were these two rotten ships alone at the end of the world, far beyond the help of man, the great seas roaring up under them in the black night, parting



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their worn cables, snatching away their anchors from them, and finally driving them one upon the other to grind and strain and prey upon each other, as though the external conspiracy of the elements against them both were not sufficient! One writes or reads the words, but what does it mean to us? and can we by any conceivable effort of imagination realise what it meant to this group of human beings who lived through that night so many hundred years ago—men like ourselves with hearts to sink and faint, capable of fear and hunger, capable of misery, pain, and endurance? Bruised and battered, wet by the terrifying surges, and entirely uncomforted by food or drink, they did somehow endure these miseries; and were to endure worse too before they were done with it.

Their six days' sojourn amid the Queen's Gardens, then, was not a great success; and as soon as they were able they set sail again, standing eastward when the wind permitted them. But wind and current were against them, and all through the month of May and the early part of June they struggled along the south coast of Cuba, their ships as full of holes as a honeycomb, pumps going incessantly, and in addition the worn-out seamen doing heroic labour at baling with buckets and kettles. Lee helm! Down go the buckets and kettles and out run the wretched scarecrows of seamen to the weary business of tacking ship, letting go, brailing up, hauling in, and making fast for the thousandth time; and then back to the pumps and kettles again. No human being could endure this for an indefinite time; and though their diet of worms



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represented by the rotten biscuit was varied with cassava bread supplied by friendly natives, the Admiral could not make his way eastward further than Cape Cruz. Round that cape his leaking, strained vessels could not be made to look against the wind and the tide. Could hardly indeed be made to float or swim upon the water at all; and the Admiral had now to consider, not whether he could sail on a particular point of the compass, but whether he could by any means avoid another course which the fates now proposed to him—namely, a perpendicular course to the bottom of the sea.

It was a race between the water and the ships, and the only thing the Admiral could think of was to turn southward across to Jamaica, which he did on June 23rd, putting into Puerto Bueno, now called Dry Harbour. But there was no food there, and as his ships were settling deeper and deeper in the water he had to make sail again and drive eastwards as far as Puerto Santa Gloria, now called Don Christopher's Cove. He was just in time. The ships were run ashore side by side on a sandy beach, the pumps were abandoned, and in one tide the ships were full of water. The remaining anchor cables were used to lash the two ships together so that they would not move; although there was little fear of that, seeing the weight of water that was in them. Everything that could be saved was brought up on deck, and a kind of cabin or platform which could be fortified was rigged on the highest part of the ships. And so no doubt for some days, although their food was almost finished, the wretched and



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exhausted voyagers could stretch their cramped limbs, and rest in the warm sun, and listen, from their safe haven on the firm sands, to the hated voice of the sea.

Thanks to careful regulations made by the Admiral, governing the intercourse between the Spaniards and the natives ashore, friendly relations were soon established, and the crews were supplied with cassava bread and fruit in abundance. Two officials superintended every purchase of provisions to avoid the possibility of any dispute, for in the event of even a momentary hostility the thatched-roof structures on the ships could easily have been set on fire, and the position of the Spaniards, without shelter amid a hostile population, would have been a desperate one. This disaster, however, was avoided; but the Admiral soon began to be anxious about the supply of provisions from the immediate neighbourhood, which after the first few days began to be irregular. There were a large number of Spaniards to be fed, the natives never kept any great store of provisions for themselves, and the Spaniards were entirely at their mercy for provisions from day to day.

Diego Mendez, always ready for active and practical service, now offered to take three men and make a journey through the island to arrange for the purchase of provisions from different villages, so that the men on the ships would not be dependent upon any one source. This offer was gratefully accepted; and Mendez, with



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his lieutenants well supplied with toys and trinkets, started eastward along the north coast of Jamaica. He made no mistakes; he was quick and clever at ingratiating himself with the caciques, and he succeeded in arranging with three separate potentates to send regular supplies of provisions to the men on the ships. At each place where he made this arrangement he detached one of his assistants and sent him back with the first load of provisions, so that the regular line of carriage might be the more quickly established; and when they had all gone he borrowed a couple of natives and pushed on by himself until he reached the eastern end of the island. He made friends here with a powerful cacique named Amerro, from whom he bought a large canoe, and paid for it with some of the clothing off his back. With the canoe were furnished six Indians to row it, and Mendez made a triumphant journey back by sea, touching at the places where his depots had been established and seeing that his commissariat arrangements were working properly. He was warmly received on his return to the ships, and the result of his efforts was soon visible in the daily supplies of food that now regularly arrived.

Thus was one difficulty overcome; but it was not likely that either Columbus himself or any of his people would be content to remain for ever on the beach of Jamaica. It was necessary to establish communication with Española, and thence with Spain; but how to do it in the absence of ships or even boats? Columbus, pondering much upon this matter, one day calls Diego Mendez



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aside; walks him off, most likely, under the great rustling trees beyond the beach, and there tells him his difficulty. "My son," says he, "you and I understand the difficulties and dangers of our position here better than any one else. We are few; the Indians are many; we know how fickle and easily irritated they are, and how a fire-brand thrown into our thatched cabins would set the whole thing ablaze. It is quite true that you have very cleverly established a provision supply, but it is dependent entirely upon the good nature of the natives and it might cease to-morrow. Here is my plan: you have a good canoe; why should some one not go over to Española in it and send back a ship for us?"

Diego Mendez, knowing very well what is meant, looks down upon the ground. His spoken opinion is that such a journey is not merely difficult but impossible—journey in a frail native canoe across one hundred and fifty miles of open and rough sea; although his private opinion is other than that. No, he cannot imagine such a thing being done; cannot think who would be able to do it.

Long silence from the Admiral; eloquent silence, accompanied by looks no less eloquent.

"Admiral," says Mendez again, "you know very well that I have risked my life for you and the people before and would do it again. But there are others who have at least as good a right to this great honour and peril as I have; let me beg of you, therefore, to summon all the company together, make this proposal



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to them, and see if any one will undertake it. If not, I will once more risk my life.”

The proposal being duly made to the assembled crews, every one, as cunning Mendez had thought, declares it impossible; every one hangs back. Upon which Diego Mendez with a fine gesture comes forward and volunteers; makes his little dramatic effect and has his little ovation. Thoroughly Spanish this, significant of that mixture of vanity and bravery, of swagger and fearlessness, which is characteristic of the best in Spain. It was a desperately brave thing to venture upon, this voyage from Jamaica to Española in a native canoe and across a sea visited by dreadful hurricanes; and the volunteer was entitled to his little piece of heroic drama.

While Mendez was making his preparations, putting a false keel on the canoe and fixing weather boards along its gunwales to prevent its shipping seas, fitting a mast and sail and giving it a coat of tar, the Admiral retired into his cabin and busied himself with his pen. He wrote one letter to Ovando briefly describing his circumstances and requesting that a ship should be sent for his relief; and another to the Sovereigns, in which a long rambling account was given of the events of the voyage, and much other matter besides, dismally eloquent of his flounderings in the quag. Much in it about Solomon and Josephus, of the Abbot Joachim, of Saint Jerome and the Great Khan; more about the Holy Sepulchre and the intentions of the Almighty in that matter; with some serious practical concern for the rich land of Veragua which

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he had discovered, lest it should share the fate of his other discoveries and be eaten up by idle adventurers. "Veragua," he says, "is not a little son which may be given to a step-mother to nurse. Of Española and Paria and all the other lands I never think without the tears falling from my eyes; I believe that the example of these ought to serve for the others." And then this passage:—

"The good and sound purpose which I always had to serve your Majesties, and the dishonour and unmerited ingratitude, will not suffer the soul to be silent although I wished it, therefore I ask pardon of your Majesties. I have been so lost and undone; until now I have wept for others that your Majesties might have compassion on them; and now may the heavens weep for me and the earth weep for me in temporal affairs; I have not a farthing to make as an offering in spiritual affairs. I have remained here on the Indian islands in the manner I have before said in great pain and infirmity, expecting every day death, surrounded by innumerable savages full of cruelty and by our enemies, and so far from the sacraments of the Holy Mother Church that I believe the soul will be forgotten when it leaves the body. Let them weep for me who have charity, truth and justice. I did not undertake this voyage of navigation to gain honour or material things, that is certain, because the hope already was entirely lost; but I did come to serve your Majesties with honest intention and with good charitable zeal, and I do not lie."

Poor old heart, older than its years, thus wailing out its sorrows to ears none too sympathetic; sad old voice, uplifted from the bright shores of that lonely island in the midst of strange seas! It will not come clear to the



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King and Queen, my Lords, I might hope to live more than a hundred years. I have not time to write more at length. I hope that the bearer of this letter may be a person of my house who will tell you verbally more than can be told in a thousand papers, and also Don Diego will supply information. I beg as a favour of the Father Prior and all the members of your religious house, that they remember me in all their prayers.

“Done on the island of J<sup>a</sup>maica, July 7, 1503.

“I am at the command of your Reverence.

.S.  
.S.A.S.  
X M Y  
X<sup>po</sup> FERENS.”

Diego Mendez found some one among the Spaniards to accompany him, but his name is not recorded. The six Indians were taken to row the canoe. They had to make their way at first against the strong currents along the northern coast of Jamaica, so as to reach its eastern extremity before striking across to Española. At one point they met a flotilla of Indian canoes, which chased them and captured them, but they escaped. When they arrived at the end of the easterly point of Jamaica, now known as Morant Point, they had to wait two or three days for calm weather and a favourable wind to waft them across to Española, and while thus waiting they were suddenly surrounded and captured by a tribe of hostile natives, who carried them off some nine or ten miles into the island, and signified their intention of killing them.

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But they began to quarrel among themselves as to how they should divide the spoils which they had captured with the canoe, and decided that the only way of settling the dispute was by some elaborate trial of hazard which they used. While they were busy with their trial Diego Mendez managed to escape, got back to the canoe, and worked his way back in it alone to the harbour where the Spaniards were encamped. The other Spaniard who was with him probably perished, for there is no record of what became of him—an obscure life lost in a brave enterprise.

One would have thought that Mendez now had enough of canoe voyages, but he had no sooner got back than he offered to set out again, only stipulating that an armed force should march along the coast by land to secure his safety until he could stand across to Española. Bartholomew Columbus immediately put himself at the head of a large and well-armed party for this purpose, and Bartolomeo Fieschi, the Genoese captain of one of the lost caravels, volunteered to accompany Mendez in a second canoe. Each canoe was now manned by six Spanish volunteers and ten Indians to row; Fieschi, as soon as they had reached the coast of Española, was to bring the good news to the Admiral; while Mendez must go on to San Domingo, procure a ship, and himself proceed to Spain with the Admiral's letters. The canoes were provisioned with water, cassava bread, and fish; and they departed on this enterprise some time in August 1503.

Their passage along the coast was protected by Bar-



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tholomew Columbus, who marched along with them on the shore. They waited a few days at the end of the island for favourable weather, and finally said farewell to the good Adelantado, who we may be sure stood watching them until they were well out of sight.

There was not a cloud in the sky when the canoes stood out to sea; the water was calm, and reflected the blistering heat of the sun. It was not a pleasant situation for people in an open boat; and Mendez and Fieschi were kept busy, as Irving says, "animating the Indians who navigated their canoes, and who frequently paused at their labour." The poor Indians, evidently much in need of such animation, would often jump into the water to escape the intolerable heat, and after a short immersion there would return to their task. Things were better when the sun went down, and the cool night came on; half the Indians then slept and half rowed, while half of the Spaniards also slept and the other half, I suppose, "animated." Irving also says that the animating half "kept guard with their weapons in hand, ready to defend themselves in the case of any perfidy on the part of their savage companions"; such perfidy being far enough from the thoughts of the savage companions, we may imagine, whose energies were entirely occupied with the oars. The next day was the same: savage companions rowing, Spaniards animating; Spaniards and savage companions alike drinking water copiously without regard for the

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smallness of their store. The second night was very hot, and the savage companions finished the water, with the result that on the third day the thirst became a torment, and at mid-day the poor companions struck work. Artful Mendez, however, had concealed two small kegs of water in his canoe, the contents of which he now administered in small doses, so that the poor Indians were enabled to take to their oars again, though with vigour much abated. Presumably the Spaniards had put up their weapons by this time, for the only perfidy shown on the part of the savage companions was that one of them died in the following night and had to be thrown overboard, while others lay panting on the bottom of the canoes; and the Spaniards had to take their turn at the oars, although they were if anything in a worse case than the Indians.

Late in the night, however, the moon rose, and Mendez had the joy of seeing its lower disc cut by a jagged line which proved to be the little islet or rock of Navassa, which lies off the westerly end of Española. New hope now animated the sufferers, and they pushed on until they were able to land on this rock, which proved to be without any vegetation whatsoever, but on the surface of which there were found some precious pools of rain-water. Mendez was able to restrain the frantic appetites of his fellow-countrymen, but the savage companions were less wise, and drank their fill; so that some of them died in torment on the spot, and others became seriously ill. The Spaniards were able to make a fire of driftwood, and boil some shell-fish, which they

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found on shore, and they wisely spent the heat of the day crouching in the shade of the rocks, and put off their departure until the evening. It was then a comparatively easy journey for them to cross the dozen miles that separated them from Española, and they landed the next day in a pleasant harbour near Cape Tiburon. Fieschi, true to his promise, was then ready to start back for Jamaica with news of the safe accomplishment of the voyage; but the remnant of the crews, Spaniards and savage companions alike, had had enough of it, and no threats or persuasions would induce them to embark again. Mendez, therefore, left his friends to enjoy some little repose before continuing their journey to San Domingo, and, taking six natives of Española to row his canoe, set off along the coast towards the capital. He had not gone half-way when he learned that Ovando was not there, but was in Xaragua, so he left his canoe and struck northward through the forest until he arrived at the Governor's camp.

Ovando welcomed Mendez cordially, praised him for his plucky voyage, and expressed the greatest concern at the plight of the Admiral; but he was very busy at the moment, and was on the point of transacting a piece of business that furnished a dismal proof of the deterioration which had taken place in him. Anacaona—the lady with the daughter whom we remember—was now ruling over the province of Xaragua, her brother having died; and as perhaps her native subjects had been giving a little





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trouble to the Governor, he had come to exert his authority. The narrow official mind, brought into contact with native life, never develops in the direction of humanity; and Ovando had now for some time made the great discovery that it was less trouble to kill people than to try to rule over them wisely. There had evidently always been a streak of Spanish cruelty in him, which had been much developed by his residence in Española; and to cruelty and narrow officialdom he now added treachery of a very monstrous and horrible kind.

He announced his intention of paying a state visit to Anacaona, who thereupon summoned all her tributary chiefs to a kind of levée held in his honour. In the midst of the levée, at a given signal, Ovando's soldiers rushed in, seized the caciques, fastened them to the wooden pillars of the house, and set the whole thing on fire; the caciques being thus miserably roasted alive. While this was going on the atrocious work was completed by the soldiers massacring every native they could see—children, women, and old men included—and Anacaona herself was taken and hanged.

All these things Diego Mendez had to witness; and when they were over, Ovando still had excuses for not hurrying to the relief of the Admiral. He had embarked on a campaign of extermination against the natives, and he followed up his atrocities at Xaragua by an expedition to the eastern end of Española, where very much the same kind of business was transacted. Weeks and months passed in this bloody cruelty, and there was always an



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excuse for putting off Mendez. Now it was because of the operations which he dignified by the name of wars, and now because he had no ship suitable for sending to Jamaica; but the truth was that Ovando, the springs of whose humanity had been entirely dried up during his disastrous reign in Española, did not want Columbus to see with his own eyes the terrible state of the island, and was callous enough to leave him either to perish or to find his own way back to the world. It was only when news came that a fleet of caravels was expected from Spain that Ovando could no longer prevent Mendez from going to San Domingo and purchasing one of them.

Ovando had indeed lost all but the outer semblance of a man; the soul or animating part of him had entirely gone to corruption. He had no interest in rescuing the Admiral; he had, on the contrary, great interest in leaving him unrescued; but curiosity as to his fate, and fear as to his actions in case he should return to Española, induced the Governor to make some effort towards spying out his condition. He had a number of trained rascals under his command—among them Diego de Escobar, one of Roldan's bright brigade; and Ovando had no sooner seen Mendez depart on his journey to San Domingo than he sent this Escobar to embark in a small caravel on a visit to Jamaica in order to see if the Admiral was still alive. The caravel had to be small, so that there could be no chance of bringing off the 130 men who had been left to perish there; and various astute instructions were

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given to Escobar in order to prevent his arrival being of any comfort or assistance to the shipwrecked ones. And so Escobar sailed; and so, in the month of March 1504, eight months after the vanishing of Mendez below the eastern horizon, the miserable company encamped on the two decaying ships on the sands at Puerto Santa Gloria descried with joyful excitement the sails of a Spanish caravel standing in to the shore.



## CHAPTER V

### THE ECLIPSE OF THE MOON

**W**E must now return to the little settlement on the coast of Jamaica—those two worn-out caravels, lashed together with ropes and bridged by an erection of wood and thatch, in which the forlorn little company was established. In all communities of men so situated there are alternate periods of action and reaction, and after the excitement incidental to the departure of Mendez, and the return of Bartholomew with the news that he had got safely away, there followed a time of reaction, in which the Spaniards looked dismally out across the empty sea and wondered when, if ever, their salvation would come. Columbus himself was now a confirmed invalid, and could hardly ever leave his bed under the thatch; and in his own condition of pain and depression his influence on the rest of the crew must inevitably have been less inspiring than it had formerly been. The men themselves, moreover, began to grow sickly, chiefly on account of the soft vegetable food, to which they were not accustomed, and partly because of their cramped quarters and the moist, unhealthy climate, which was the very opposite of what they needed after their long period of suffering and hardship at sea.

As the days and weeks passed, with no occupation save

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the daily business of collecting food that gradually became more and more nauseous to them, and of straining their eyes across the empty blue of the sea in an anxious search for the returning canoes of Fieschi, the spirits of the castaways sank lower and lower. Inevitably their discontent became articulate and broke out into murmurings. The usual remedy for this state of affairs is to keep the men employed at some hard work; but there was no work for them to do, and the spirit of dissatisfaction had ample opportunity to spread. As usual it soon took the form of hostility to the Admiral. They seem to have borne him no love or gratitude for his masterly guiding of them through so many dangers; and now when he lay ill and in suffering his treacherous followers must needs fasten upon him the responsibility for their condition. After a month or two had passed, and it became certain that Fieschi was not coming back, the castaways could only suppose that he and Mendez had either been captured by natives or had perished at sea, and that their fellow-countrymen must still be without news of the Admiral's predicament. They began to say also that the Admiral was banished from Spain; that there was no desire or intention on the part of the Sovereigns to send an expedition to his relief, even if they had known of his condition; and that in any case they must long ago have given him up for lost.

When the pot boils the scum rises to the surface, and the first result of these disloyal murmurings and agitations





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was to bring into prominence the two brothers, Francisco and Diego de Porras, who, it will be remembered, owed their presence with the expedition entirely to the Admiral's good nature in complying with the request of their brother-in-law Morales, who had apparently wished to find some distant occupation for them. They had been given honourable posts as officers, in which they had not proved competent; but the Admiral had always treated them with kindness and courtesy, regarding them more as guests than as servants. Who or what these Porras brothers were, where they came from, who were their father and mother, or what was their training, I do not know; it is enough for us to know that the result of it all had been the production of a couple of very mean scoundrels, who now found an opportunity to exercise their scoundrelism.

When they discovered the nature of the murmuring and discontent among the crew they immediately set them to work it up into open mutiny. They represented that, as Mendez had undoubtedly perished, there was no hope of relief from Española; that the Admiral did not even expect such relief, knowing that the island was forbidden ground to him. They insinuated that he was as well content to remain in Jamaica as anywhere else, since he had to undergo a period of banishment until his friends at Court could procure his forgiveness. They were all, said the Porras brothers, being made tools for the Admiral's convenience; as he did not wish to leave Jamaica himself, he was keeping them all there, to perish as likely as not, and in the meantime to form a bodyguard and establish



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a service for himself. The Porras brothers suggested that, under these circumstances, it would be as well to take a fleet of native canoes from the Indians and make their own way to Española; the Admiral would never undertake the voyage himself, being too helpless from the gout; but it would be absurd if the whole company were to be allowed to perish because of the infirmities of one man. They reminded the murmurers that they would not be the first people who had rebelled with success against the despotic rule of Columbus, and that the conduct of the Sovereigns on a former occasion afforded them some promise that those who rebelled again would receive something quite different from punishment.

Christmas passed, the old year went out in this strange, unhomelike place, and the new year came in. The Admiral, as we have seen, was now almost entirely crippled and confined to his bed; and he was lying alone in his cabin on the second day of the year when Francisco de Porras abruptly entered. Something very odd and flurried about Porras; he jerks and stammers, and suddenly breaks out into a flood of agitated speech, in which the Admiral distinguishes a stream of bitter reproach and impertinence. The thing forms itself into nothing more or less than a hurried, gabbling complaint; the people are dissatisfied at being kept here week after week with no hope of relief; they accuse the Admiral of neglecting their interests; and so on. Columbus, raising himself in his bed, tries to pacify Porras; gives him reasons why it is impossible for them to depart in canoes; makes every



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endeavour, in short, to bring this miserable fellow back to his duties. He is watching Porras's eye all the time; sees that he is too excited to be pacified by reason, and suspects that he has considerable support behind him; and suggests that the crew had better all be assembled and a consultation held as to the best course to pursue.

It is no good to reason with mutineers; and the Admiral has no sooner made this suggestion than he sees that it was a mistake. Porras scoffs at it; action, not consultation, is what he demands; in short he presents an ultimatum to the Admiral—either to embark with the whole company at once, or stay behind in Jamaica at his own pleasure. And then, turning his back on Columbus and raising his voice, he calls out, “I am for Castile; those who choose may follow me!”

The shout was a signal, and immediately from every part of the vessel resounded the voices of the Spaniards, crying out that they would follow Porras. In the midst of the confusion Columbus hobbled out of his bed and staggered on to the deck; Bartholomew seized his weapons and prepared for action; but the whole of the crew was not mutinous, and there was a large enough loyal remnant to make it unwise for the chicken-hearted mutineers to do more for the moment than shout. Some of them, it is true, were heard threatening the life of the Admiral, but he was hurried back to his bed by a few of the faithful ones, and others of them rushed up to the fierce Bartholomew, and with great difficulty persuaded him to drop his lance and retire to Christopher's cabin with him while



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they dealt with the offenders. They begged Columbus to let the scoundrels go if they wished to, as the condition of those who remained would be improved rather than hurt by their absence, and they would be a good riddance. They then went back to the deck and told Porras and his followers that the sooner they went the better, and that nobody would interfere with their going as long as they offered no one any violence.

The Admiral had some time before purchased some good canoes from the natives, and the mutineers seized ten of these and loaded them with native provisions. Every effort was made to add to the number of the disloyal ones; and when they saw their friends making ready to depart several of these did actually join. There were forty-eight who finally embarked with the brothers Porras; and there would have been more, but that so many of them were sick and unable to face the exposure of the voyage. As it was, those who remained witnessed with no very cheerful emotions the departure of their companions, and even in some cases fell to tears and lamentations. The poor old Admiral struggled out of his bed again, went round among the sick and the loyal, cheering them and comforting them, and promising to use every effort of the power left to him to secure an adequate reward for their loyalty when he should return to Spain.

We need only follow the career of Porras and his deserters for the present far enough to see them safely

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off the premises and out of the way of the Admiral and our narrative. They coasted along the shore of Jamaica to the eastward as Mendez had done, landing whenever they had a mind to, and robbing and outraging the natives; and they took a particularly mean and dirty revenge on the Admiral by committing all their robberies and outragings as though under his authority, assuring the offended Indians that what they did they did by his command and that what they took he would pay for; so that as they went along they sowed seeds of grievance and hostility against the Admiral. They told the natives, moreover, that Columbus was an enemy of all Indians, and that they would be very well advised to kill him and get him out of the way.

They had not managed very well with the navigation of the canoes; and while they were waiting for fine weather at the eastern end of the island they collected a number of natives to act as oarsmen. When they thought the weather suitable they put to sea in the direction of Española. They were only about fifteen miles from the shore, however, when the wind began to head them and to send up something of a sea; not rough, but enough to make the crank and overloaded canoes roll heavily, for they had not been prepared, as those of Mendez were, with false keels and weather-boards. The Spaniards got frightened and turned back to Jamaica; but the sea became rougher, the canoes rolled more and more, they often shipped a quantity of water, and the situation began to look serious. All their belongings except arms and



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provisions were thrown overboard ; but still, as the wind rose and the sea with it, it became obvious that unless the canoes were further lightened they would not reach the shore in safety. Under these circumstances the Spaniards forced the natives to leap into the water, where they swam about like rats as well as they could, and then came back to the canoes in order to hold on and rest themselves. When they did this the Spaniards slashed at them with their swords or cut off their hands, so that one by one they fell back and, still swimming about feebly as well as they could with their bleeding hands or stumps of arms, the miserable wretches perished and sank at last.

By this dreadful expedient the Spaniards managed to reach Jamaica again, and when they landed they immediately fell to quarrelling as to what they should do next. Some were for trying to make the island of Cuba, the wind being favourable for that direction ; others were for returning and making their submission to the Admiral ; others for going back and seizing the remainder of his arms and stores ; others for staying where they were for the present, and making another attempt to reach Española when the weather should be more favourable. This last plan, being the counsel of present inaction, was adopted by the majority of the rabble ; so they settled themselves at a neighbouring Indian village, behaving in the manner with which we are familiar. A little later, when the weather was calm, they made another attempt at the voyage, but were driven



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back in the same way; and being by this time sick of canoe voyages, they abandoned the attempt, and began to wander back westward through the island, maltreating the natives as before, and sowing seeds of bitter rancour and hostility against the Admiral; in whose neighbourhood we shall unfortunately hear of them again.

In the meantime their departure had somewhat relieved the condition of affairs on board the hulks. There were more provisions and there was more peace; the Admiral, rising above his own infirmities to the necessities of the occasion, moved unweariedly among the sick, cheering them and nursing them back into health and good humour, so that gradually the condition of the little colony was brought into better order and health than it had enjoyed since its establishment.

But now unfortunately the evil harvest sown by the Porras gang in their journey to the east of the island began to ripen. The supplies of provisions, which had hitherto been regularly brought by the natives, began to appear with less punctuality, and to fall off both in quantity and quality. The trinkets with which they were purchased had now been distributed in such quantities that they began to lose their novelty and value; sometimes the natives demanded a much higher price for the provisions they brought, and (having by this time acquired the art of bargaining) would take their stores away again if they did not get the price they asked.



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But even of this device they soon grew weary; from being irregular, the supplies of provisions from some quarters ceased altogether, and the possibilities of famine began to stare the unhappy castaways in the face. It must be remembered that they were in a very weak physical condition, and that among the so-called loyal remnant there were very few who were not invalids; and they were unable to get out into the island and forage for themselves. If the able-bodied handful were to sally forth in search of provisions, the hulks would be left defenceless and at the mercy of the natives, of whose growing hostility the Admiral had by this time discovered abundant evidence. Thus little by little the food supply diminished until there was practically nothing left, and the miserable company of invalids were confronted with the alternative of either dying of starvation or desperately attempting a canoe voyage.

It was from this critical situation that the spirit and resource of Columbus once more furnished a way of escape, and in these circumstances that he invented and worked a device that has since become famous—the great Eclipse Trick. Among his small library in the cabin of the ship was the book containing the astronomical tables of Regiomontanus; and from his study of this work he was aware that an eclipse of the moon was due on a certain date near at hand. He sent his Indian interpreter to visit the neighbouring caciques, summoning



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them to a great conference to be held on the evening of the eclipse, as the Admiral had matters of great importance to reveal to them. They duly arrived on the evening appointed; not the caciques alone, but large numbers of the native population, well prepared for whatever might take place. Columbus then addressed them through his interpreter, informing him that he was under the protection of a God who dwelt in the skies and who rewarded all who assisted him and punished all his enemies. He made an effective use of the adventures of Mendez and Porras, pointing out that Mendez, who took his voyage by the Admiral's orders, had got away in safety, but that Porras and his followers, who had departed in disobedience and mutiny, had been prevented by the heavenly power from achieving their object. He told them that his God was angry with them for their hostility and for their neglect to supply him with provisions; and that in token of his anger he was going to send them a dreadful punishment, as a sign of which they would presently see the moon change colour and lose its light, and the earth become dark.

This address was spun out as long as possible; but even so it was followed by an interval in which, we may be sure, Columbus anxiously eyed the serene orb of night, and doubtless prayed that Regiomontanus might not have made a mistake in his calculations. Some of the Indians were alarmed, some of them contemptuous; but it was pretty clearly realised on both sides that matters between them had come to a head; and probably if



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Regiomontanus, who had worked out these tables of figures and calculations so many years ago in his German home, had done his work carelessly or made a mistake, Columbus and his followers would have been massacred on the spot.

But Regiomontanus, God bless him! had made no mistake. Sure enough, and punctually to the appointed time, the dark shadow began to steal over the moon's disc; its light gradually faded, and a ghostly darkness crept over the face of the world. Columbus, having seen that all was right with the celestial machinery, had retired to his cabin; and presently he found himself besieged there in the dark night by crowds of natives frantically bringing what provisions they had and protesting their intention of continuing to bring them for the rest of their lives. If only the Admiral would ask his God to forgive them, there was no limit to the amount of provisions that he might have! The Admiral, piously thankful, and perhaps beginning to enjoy the situation a little, kept himself shut up in his cabin as though communing with the implacable deity, while the darkness deepened over the land and the shore resounded with the howling and sobbing of the terrified natives. He kept a look-out on the sky; and when he saw that the eclipse was about to pass away, he came out and informed the natives that God had decided to pardon them on condition of their remaining faithful in the matter of provisions, and that as a sign of His mercy He would restore the light. The beautiful miracle

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went on through its changing phases; and, watching in the darkness, the terrified natives saw the silver edge of the moon appearing again, the curtain that had obscured it gradually rolling away, and land and sea lying visible to them and once more steeped in the serene light which they worshipped. It is likely that Christopher slept more soundly that night than he had slept for many nights before.





## CHAPTER VI

### RELIEF OF THE ADMIRAL

**T**HERE was no further difficulty about provisions, which were punctually brought by the natives on the old terms; but the familiar spirit of sedition began to work again among the unhappy Spaniards, and once more a mutiny, led this time by the apothecary Bernardo, took form—the intention being to seize the remaining canoes and attempt to reach Española. This was the point at which matters had arrived, in March 1504, when as the twilight was falling one evening a cry was raised that there was a ship in sight; and presently a small caravel was seen standing in towards the shore. All ideas of mutiny were forgotten, and the crew assembled in joyful anticipation to await, as they thought, the coming of their deliverers. The caravel came on with the evening breeze; but while it was yet a long way off the shore it was seen to be lying to; a boat was lowered and rowed towards the harbour.

As the boat drew near Columbus could recognise in it Diego de Escobar, whom he remembered having condemned to death for his share in the rebellion of Roldan. He was not the man whom Columbus would have most wished to see at that moment. The boat came alongside



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the hulks, and a barrel of wine and a side of bacon, the sea-compliment customary on such occasions, was handed up. Greatly to the Admiral's surprise, however, Escobar did not come on board, but pushed his boat off and began to speak to Columbus from a little distance. He told him that Ovando was greatly distressed at the Admiral's misfortunes; that he had been much occupied by wars in Española, and had not been able to send a message to him before; that he greatly regretted he had no ship at present large enough to bring off the Admiral and his people, but that he would send one as soon as he had it. In the meantime the Admiral was to be assured that all his affairs in Española were being attended to faithfully, and that Escobar was instructed to bring back at once any letters which the Admiral might wish to write.

The coolness and unexpectedness of this message completely took away the breath of the unhappy Spaniards, who doubtless stood looking in bewilderment from Escobar to Columbus, unable to believe that the caravel had not been sent for their relief. Columbus, however, with a self-restraint which cannot be too highly praised, realised that Escobar meant what he said, and that by protesting against his action or trying to interfere with it he would only be putting himself in the wrong. He therefore retired immediately to his cabin and wrote a letter to Ovando, in which he drew a vivid picture of the distress of his people, reported the rebellion of the Porras brothers, and reminded Ovando that he relied upon the fulfilment of his promise to send relief. The letter was handed



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over to Escobar, who rowed back with it to his caravel and immediately sailed away with it into the night.

Before he could retire to commune with his own thoughts or to talk with his faithful brother, Columbus had the painful duty of speaking to his people, whose puzzled and disappointed faces must have cost him some extra pangs. He told them that he was quite satisfied with the message from Ovando, that it was a sign of kindness on his part thus to send them news in advance that relief was coming, that their situation was now known in San Domingo, and that vessels would soon be here to take them away. He added that he himself was so sure of these things that he had refused to go back with Escobar, but had preferred to remain with them and share their lot until relief should come. This had the desired effect of cheering the Spaniards; but it was far from representing the real sentiments of Columbus on the subject. The fact that Escobar had been chosen to convey this strange empty message of sympathy seemed to him suspicious, and with his profound distrust of Ovando Columbus began to wonder whether some further scheme might not be on foot to damage him in the eyes of the Sovereigns. He was convinced that Ovando had meant to let him starve on the island, and that the real purpose of Escobar's visit had been to find out what condition the Admiral was in, so that Ovando might know how to act. It is very hard to get at the truth



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of what these two men thought of each other. They were both suspicious, each was playing for his own hand, and Ovando was only a little more unscrupulous than Columbus; but there can be no doubt that whatever his motives may have been Ovando acted with abominable treachery and cruelty in leaving the Admiral unrelieved for nearly nine months.

Columbus now tried to make use of the visit of Escobar to restore to allegiance the band of rebels that were wandering about in the neighbourhood under the leadership of the Porras brothers. Why he should have wished to bring them back to the ships is not clear, for by all accounts he was very well rid of them; but probably his pride as a commander was hurt by the thought that half of his company had defied his authority and were in a state of mutiny. At any rate he sent out an ambassador to Porras, offering to receive the mutineers back without any punishment, and to give them a free passage to Española in the vessels which were shortly expected, if they would return to their allegiance with him.

The folly of this overture was made manifest by the treatment which it received. It was bad enough to make advances to the Porras brothers, but it was still worse to have those advances repulsed, and that is what happened. The Porras brothers, being themselves incapable of any single-mindedness, affected not to believe in the sincerity of the Admiral's offer; they feared that he was laying



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some kind of trap for them; moreover, they were doing very well in their lawless way, and living very comfortably on the natives; so they told Columbus's ambassadors that his offer was declined. At the same time they undertook to conduct themselves in an amicable and orderly manner on condition that, when the vessels arrived, one of them should be apportioned to the exclusive use of the mutineers; and that in the meantime the Admiral should share with them his store of provisions and trinkets, as theirs were exhausted.

This was the impertinent decision of the Porras brothers; but it did not quite commend itself to their followers, who were fearful of the possible results if they should persist in their mutinous conduct. They were very much afraid of being left behind in the island, and in any case, having attempted and failed in the main object of their mutiny, they saw no reason why they should refuse a free pardon. But the Porras brothers lied busily. They said that the Admiral was merely laying a trap in order to get them into his power, and that he would send them home to Spain in chains; and they even went so far as to assure their fellow-rebels that the story of a caravel having arrived was not really true; but that Columbus, who was an adept in the arts of necromancy, had really made his people believe that they had seen a caravel in the dusk; and that if one had really arrived it would not have gone away so suddenly, nor would the Admiral and his brother and son have failed to take their passage in it.



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To consolidate the effect of these remarkable statements on the still wavering mutineers, the Porrás brothers decided to commit them to an open act of violence which would successfully alienate them from the Admiral. They formed them, therefore, into an armed expedition, with the idea of seizing the stores remaining on the wreck and taking the Admiral personally. Columbus fortunately got news of this, as he nearly always did when there was treachery in the wind; and he sent Bartholomew to try to persuade them once more to return to their duty—a vain and foolish mission, the vanity and folly of which were fully apparent to Bartholomew. He duly set out upon it; but instead of mild words he took with him fifty armed men—the whole available able-bodied force, in fact—and drew near to the position occupied by the rebels.

The exhortation of the Porrás brothers had meanwhile produced its effect, and it was decided that six of the strongest men among the mutineers should make for Bartholomew himself and try to capture or kill him. The fierce Adelantado, finding himself surrounded by six assailants, who seemed to be directing their whole effort against his life, swung his sword in a Bersark rage and slashed about him, to such good purpose that four or five of his assailants soon lay round him killed or wounded. At this point Francisco de Porrás rushed in and cleft the shield held by Bartholomew, severely wounding the hand that held it; but the sword stuck in the



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shield, and while Porras was endeavouring to draw it out Bartholomew and some others closed upon him, and after a sharp struggle took him prisoner. The battle, which was a short one, had been meanwhile raging fiercely among the rest of the forces; but when the mutineers saw their leader taken prisoner, and many of their number lying dead or wounded, they scattered and fled, but not before Bartholomew's force had taken several prisoners. It was then found that, although the rebels had suffered heavily, none of Bartholomew's men were killed, and only one other besides himself was wounded. The next day the mutineers all came in to surrender, submitting an abject oath of allegiance; and Columbus, always strangely magnanimous to rebels and insurgents, pardoned them all with the exception of Francisco de Porras, who, one is glad to know, was confined in irons to be sent to Spain for trial.


This submission, which was due to the prompt action of Bartholomew rather than to the somewhat feeble diplomacy of the Admiral, took place on March 20th, and proved somewhat embarrassing to Columbus. He could put no faith in the oaths and protestations of the mutineers; and he was very doubtful about the wisdom of establishing them once more on the wrecks with the hitherto orderly remnant. He therefore divided them up into several bands, and placing each under the command of an officer whom he could trust, he supplied them with trinkets and de-





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spatched them to different parts of the island, for the purpose of collecting provisions and carrying on barter with the natives. By this means the last month or two of this most trying and exciting sojourn on the island of Jamaica were passed in some measure of peace; and towards the end of June it was brought to an end by the arrival of two caravels. One of them was the ship purchased by Diego Mendez out of the three which had arrived from Spain; and the other had been despatched by Ovando in deference, it is said, to public feeling in San Domingo, which had been so influenced by Mendez's account of the Admiral's heroic adventures that Ovando dared not neglect him any longer. Moreover, if it had ever been his hope that the Admiral would perish on the island of Jamaica, that hope was now doomed to frustration, and, as he was to be rescued in spite of all, Ovando no doubt thought that he might as well, for the sake of appearances, have a hand in the rescue.

The two caravels, laden with what was worth saving from the two abandoned hulks, and carrying what was left of the Admiral's company, sailed from Jamaica on June 28, 1504. Columbus's joy, as we may imagine, was deep and heartfelt. He said afterwards to Mendez that it was the happiest day of his life, for that he had never hoped to leave the place alive.

The mission of Mendez, then, had been successful, although he had had to wait for eight months to fulfil it.



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He himself, in accordance with Columbus's instructions, had gone to Spain in another caravel of the fleet out of which he had purchased the relieving ship; and as he passes out of our narrative we may now take our farewell of him. Among the many men employed in the Admiral's service no figure stands out so brightly as that of Diego Mendez; and his record, almost alone of those whose service of the Admiral earned them office and distinction, is unblotted by any stain of crime or treachery. He was as brave as a lion and as faithful as a dog, and throughout his life remained true to his ideal of service to the Admiral and his descendants. He was rewarded by King Ferdinand for his distinguished services, and allowed to bear a canoe on his coat-of-arms; he was with the Admiral at his death-bed at Valladolid, and when he himself came to die thirty years afterwards in the same place he made a will in which he incorporated a brief record of the events of the adventurous voyage in which he had borne the principal part, and also enshrined his devotion to the name and family of Columbus. His demands for himself were very modest, although there is reason to fear that they were never properly fulfilled. He was curiously anxious to be remembered chiefly by his plucky canoe voyage; and in giving directions for his tomb, and ordering that a stone should be placed over his remains, he wrote: "In the centre of the said stone let a canoe be carved, which is a piece of wood hollowed out in which the Indians navigate, because in such a boat I navigated three hundred leagues, and let some letters be placed above it saying: *Canoa.*"



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The epitaph that he chose for himself was in the following sense :—

*Here lies the Honourable Gentleman*

*DIEGO MENDEZ*

*He greatly served the royal crown of Spain in the discovery and conquest of the Indies with the Admiral Don Christopher Columbus of glorious memory who discovered them, and afterwards by himself, with his own ships, at his own expense.*

*He died, etc.*

*He begs from charity a PATERNOSTER  
and an AVE MARIA.*

Surely he deserves them, if ever an honourable gentleman did.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE HERITAGE OF HATRED

**A**LTHOUGH the journey from Jamaica to Española had been accomplished in four days by Mendez in his canoe, the caravels conveying the party rescued from Puerto Santa Gloria were seven weary weeks on this short voyage; a strong north-west wind combining with the west-going current to make their progress to the north-west impossible for weeks at a time. It was not until the 13th of August 1503 that they anchored in the harbour of San Domingo, and Columbus once more set foot, after an absence of more than two years, on the territory from the governorship of which he had been deposed.

He was well enough received by Ovando, who came down in state to meet him, lodged him in his own house, and saw that he was treated with the distinction suitable to his high station. The Spanish colony, moreover, seemed to have made something of a hero of Columbus during his long absence, and they received him with enthusiasm. But his satisfaction in being in San Domingo ended with that. He was constantly made to feel that it was Ovando and not he who was the ruler there; and Ovando emphasised the difference between them by numerous acts of high-



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handed authority, some of them of a kind calculated to be extremely mortifying to the Admiral. Among these things he insisted upon releasing Porras, whom Columbus had confined in chains ; and he talked of punishing those faithful followers of Columbus who had taken part in the battle between Bartholomew and the rebels, because in this fight some of the followers of Porras had been killed. Acts like these produced weary bickerings and arguments between Ovando and Columbus, unprofitable to them, unprofitable to us. The Admiral seems now to have relapsed into a condition in which he cared only for two things, his honours and his emoluments. Over every authoritative act of Ovando's there was a weary squabble between him and the Admiral, Ovando claiming his right of jurisdiction over the whole territory of the New World, including Jamaica, and Columbus insisting that by his commission and letters of authority he had been placed in sole charge of the members of his own expedition.

And then, as regards his emoluments, the Admiral considered himself (and not without justice) to have been treated most unfairly. By the extravagant terms of his original agreement he was, as we know, entitled to a share of all rents and dues, as well as of the gold collected ; but it had been no one's business to collect these for him, and every one's business to neglect them. No one had cared ; no one had kept any accounts of what was due to the Admiral ; he could not find out what had been paid and what had not been paid. He accused Ovando of having impeded his agent Carvajal in his duty of collecting



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the Admiral's revenues, and of disobeying the express orders of Queen Isabella in that matter; and so on—a state of affairs the most wearisome, sordid, and unprofitable in which any man could be involved.

And if Columbus turned his eyes from the office in San Domingo inland to that Paradise which he had entered twelve years before, what change and ruin, dreary, horrible and complete, did he not discover! The birds still sang, and the nights were still like May in Cordova; but upon that happy harmony the sound of piteous cries and shrieks had long since broken, and a long and black December night of misery had spread its pall over the island. Wherever he went, Columbus found the same evidence of ruin and desolation. Where once innumerable handsome natives had thronged the forests and the villages, there were now silence and smoking ruin, and the few natives that he met were emaciated, terrified, dying. Did he reflect, I wonder, that some part of the responsibility of all this horror rested on him? That many a system of island government, the machinery of which was now fed by a steady stream of human lives, had been set going by him in ignorance, or greed of quick commercial returns? It is probable that he did not; for he now permanently regarded himself as a much-injured man, and was far too much occupied with his own wrongs to realise that they were as nothing compared with the monstrous stream of wrong and suffering that he had unwittingly sent flowing into the world.



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In the island under Ovando's rule Columbus saw the logical results of his own original principles of government, which had recognised the right of the Christians to possess the persons and labours of the heathen natives. Las Casas, who was living in Española as a young priest at this time, and was destined by long residence there and in the West Indies to qualify himself as their first historian, saw what Columbus saw, and saw also the even worse things that happened in after years in Cuba and Jamaica ; and it is to him that we owe our knowledge of the condition of island affairs at this time. The colonists whom Ovando had brought out had come very much in the spirit that in our own day characterised the rush to the north-western goldfields of America. They brought only the slightest equipment, and were no sooner landed at San Domingo than they set out into the island like so many picnic parties, being more careful to carry vessels in which to bring back the gold they were to find than proper provisions and equipment to support them in the labour of finding it. The roads, says Las Casas, swarmed like ant-hills with these adventurers rushing forth to the mines, which were about twenty-five miles distant from San Domingo ; they were in the highest spirits, and they made it a kind of race as to who should get there first. They thought they had nothing to do but to pick up shining lumps of gold ; and when they found that they had to dig and delve in the hard earth, and to dig systematically and continuously, with a great deal of digging for very little gold, their spirits fell. They were





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not used to dig; and it happened that most of them began in an unprofitable spot, where they digged for eight days without finding any gold. Their provisions were soon exhausted; and in a week they were back again in San Domingo, tired, famished, and bitterly disappointed. They had no genius for steady labour; most of them were virtually without means; and although they lived in San Domingo on what they had as long as possible, they were soon starving there, and selling the clothes off their backs to procure food. Some of them took situations with the other settlers, more fell victims to the climate of the island and their own imprudences and distresses; and a thousand of them had died within two years.

Ovando had revived the enthusiasm for mining by two enactments. He reduced the share of discovered gold payable to the Crown, and he developed Columbus's system of forced labour to such an extent that the mines were entirely worked by it. To each Spaniard, whether mining or farming, so many natives were allotted. It was not called slavery; the natives were supposed to be paid a minute sum, and their employers were also expected to teach them the Christian religion. That was the plan. The way in which it worked was that, a body of native men being allotted to a Spanish settler for a period, say, of six or eight months—for the enactment was precise in putting a period to the term of slavery—the natives would be marched off, probably many days' journey from their homes and families, and set to work under a Spanish



## THE HERITAGE OF HATRED

foreman. The work, as we have already seen, was infinitely harder than that to which they were accustomed; and most serious of all, it was done under conditions that took all the heart out of the labour. A man will toil in his own garden or in tilling his own land with interest and happiness, not counting the hours which he spends there; knowing in fact that his work is worth doing, because he is doing it for a good reason. But put the same man to work in a gang merely for the aggrandisement of some other over-man; and the heart and cheerfulness will soon die out of him.

It was so with these children of the sun. They were put to work ten times harder than any they had ever done before, and they were put to it under the lash. The light diet of their habit had been sufficient to support them in their former existence of happy idleness and dalliance, and they had not wanted anything more than their cassava bread and a little fish and fruit; now, however, they were put to work at a pressure which made a very different kind of feeding necessary to them, and this they did not get. Now and then a handful of pork would be divided among a dozen of them, but they were literally starved, and were accustomed to scramble like dogs for the bones that were thrown from the tables of the Spaniards, which bones they ground up and mixed with their bread so that no portion of them might be lost. They died in numbers under these hard conditions, and, compared with their lives, their deaths must often have been happy. When the time came for them to go home they were generally



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utterly worn out and crippled, and had to face a long journey of many days with no food to support them but what they could get on the journey; and the roads were strewn with the dead bodies of those who fell by the way.

And far worse things happened to them than labour and exhaustion. It became the custom among the Spaniards to regard the lives of the natives as of far less value than those of the dogs that were sometimes set upon them in sport. A Spaniard riding along would make a wager with his fellow that he would cut the head off a native with one stroke of his sword; and many attempts would be laughingly made, and many living bodies hideously mutilated and destroyed, before the feat would be accomplished. Another sport was one similar to pig-sticking as it is practised in India, except that instead of pigs native women and children were stuck with the lances. There was no kind of mutilation and monstrous cruelty that was not practised. If there be any powers of hell, they stalked at large through the forests and valleys of Española. Lust and bloody cruelty, of a kind not merely indescribable but unrealisable by sane men and women, drenched the once happy island with anguish and terror. And in payment for it the Spaniards undertook to teach the heathen the Christian religion.

The five chiefs who had ruled with justice and wisdom over the island of Española in the early days of Columbus were all dead, wiped out by the wave of wild death and



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cruelty that had swept over the island. The gentle Guacanagari, when he saw the desolation that was beginning to overwhelm human existence, had fled into the mountains, hiding his face in shame from the sons of men, and had miserably died there. Caonabo, Lord of the House of Gold, fiercest and bravest of them all, who first realised that the Spaniards were enemies to the native peace, after languishing in prison in the house of Columbus at Isabella for some time, had died in captivity during the voyage to Spain. Anacaona his wife, the Bloom of the Gold, that brave and beautiful woman, whose admiration of the Spaniards had by their bloody cruelties been turned into detestation, had been shamefully betrayed and ignominiously hanged. Behechio, her brother, the only cacique who did not sue for peace after the first conquest of the island by Christopher and Bartholomew Columbus, was dead long ago of wounds and sorrow. Guarionex, the Lord of the Vega Real, who had once been friendly enough, who had danced to the Spanish pipe and learned the *Pater-noster* and *Ave Maria*, and whose progress in conversion to Christianity the seduction of his wives by those who were converting him had interrupted, after wandering in the mountains of Ciguay had been imprisoned in chains, and drowned in the hurricane of June 30, 1502.

The fifth chief, Cotabanama, Lord of the province of Higua, made the last stand against Ovando in defence of the native right to existence, and was only defeated after severe battles and dreadful slaughters. His territory was among the mountains, and his last insurrection was



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caused, as so many others had been, by the intolerable conduct of the Spaniards towards the wives and daughters of the Indians. Collecting all his warriors, Cotabanama attacked the Spanish posts in his neighbourhood. At every engagement his troops were defeated and dispersed, but only to collect again, fight again with even greater fury, be defeated and dispersed again, and rally again against the Spaniards. They literally fought to the death. After every battle the Spaniards made a massacre of all the natives they could find, old men, children, and pregnant women being alike put to the sword or burned in their houses. When their companions fell beside them, instead of being frightened they became more furious; and when they were wounded they would pluck the arrows out of their bodies and hurl them back at the Spaniards, falling dead in the very act. After one such severe defeat and massacre the natives scattered for many months, hiding among the mountains and trying to collect and succour their decimated families; but the Spaniards, who with their dogs grew skilful at tracking the Indians and found it pleasant sport, came upon them in the places of refuge where little groups of them were sheltering their women and children, and there slowly and cruelly slaughtered them, often with the addition of tortures and torments in order to induce them to reveal the whereabouts of other bands. When it was possible the Spaniards sometimes hanged thirteen of them in a row in commemoration of their Blessed Saviour and the Twelve Apostles; and while they were hanging, and before



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they had quite died, they would hack at them with their swords in order to test the edge of the steel. At the last stand, when the fierceness and bitterness of the contest rose to a height on both sides, Cotabanama was captured and a plan made to broil him slowly to death; but for some reason this plan was not carried out, and the brave chief was taken to San Domingo and publicly hanged like a thief.

After that there was never any more resistance; it was simply a case of extermination, which the Spaniards easily accomplished by cutting off the heads of women as they passed by, and impaling infants and little children on their lances as they rode through the villages. Thus, in the twelve years since the discovery of Columbus, between half a million and a million natives perished; and as the Spanish colonisation spread afterwards from island to island, and the banner of civilisation and Christianity was borne farther abroad throughout the Indies, the same hideous process was continued. In Cuba, in Jamaica, throughout the Antilles, the cross and the sword, the whip-lash and the Gospel advanced together; wherever the Host was consecrated, hideous cries of agony and suffering broke forth; until happily, in the fulness of time, the dire business was complete, and the whole of the people who had inhabited this garden of the world were exterminated and their blood and race wiped from the face of the earth. . . . Unless,

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indeed, blood and race and hatred be imperishable things; unless the faithful Earth that bred and reared the race still keeps in her soil, and in the waving branches of the trees and the green grasses, the sacred essences of its blood and hatred; unless in the full cycle of Time, when that suffering flesh and blood shall have gone through all the changes of substance and condition, from corruption and dust through flowers and grasses and trees and animals back into the living body of mankind again, it shall one day rise up terribly to avenge that horror of the past. Unless Earth and Time remember, O Children of the Sun! for men have forgotten, and on the soil of your Paradise the African negro, learned in the vices of Europe, erects his monstrous effigy of civilisation and his grotesque mockery of freedom; unless it be through his brutish body, into which the blood and hatred with which the soil of Española was soaked have now passed, that they shall dreadfully strike at the world again.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ADMIRAL COMES HOME

**O**N September 12, 1504, Christopher Columbus did many things for the last time. He who had so often occupied himself in ports and harbours with the fitting out of ships and preparations for a voyage now completed at San Domingo the simple preparations for the last voyage he was to take. The ship he had come in from Jamaica had been refitted and placed under the command of Bartholomew, and he had bought another small caravel in which he and his son were to sail. For the last time he superintended those details of fitting out and provisioning which were now so familiar to him; for the last time he walked in the streets of San Domingo and mingled with the direful activities of his colony; he looked his last upon the place where the vital scenes of his life had been set, for the last time weighed anchor, and took his last farewell of the seas and islands of his discovery. A little steadfast looking, a little straining of the eyes, a little heart-aching no doubt, and *Española* has sunk down into the sea behind the white wake of the ships; and with its fading away the span of active life allotted to this man shuts down, and his powerful opportunities for good or evil are withdrawn.





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There was something great and heroic about the Admiral's last voyage. Wind and sea rose up as though to make a last bitter attack upon the man who had disclosed their mysteries and betrayed their secrets. He had hardly cleared the island before the first gale came down upon him and dismasted his ship, so that he was obliged to transfer himself and his son to Bartholomew's caravel and send the disabled vessel back to Española. The shouting sea, as though encouraged by this triumph, hurled tempest after tempest upon the one lonely small ship that was staggering on its way to Spain; and the duel between this great seaman and the vast elemental power that he had so often outwitted began in earnest. One little ship, one enfeebled man to be destroyed by the power of the sea: that was the problem, and there were thousands of miles of sea-room, and two months of time to solve it in! Tempest after tempest rose and drove unceasingly against the ship. A mast was sprung and had to be cut away; another, and the woodwork from the forecastles and high stern works had to be stripped and lashed round the crazy mainmast to preserve it from wholesale destruction. Another gale, and the mast had to be shortened, for even reinforced as it was it would not bear the strain; and so crippled, so buffeted, this very small ship leapt and staggered on her way across the Atlantic, keeping her bowsprit pointed to that region of the foamy emptiness where Spain was.

The Admiral lay crippled in his cabin listening to the rush and bubble of the water, feeling the blows and recoils

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of the unending battle, hearkening anxiously to the straining of the timbers and the vessel's agonised complainings under the pounding of the seas. We do not know what his thoughts were; but we may guess that they looked backward rather than forward, and that often they must have been prayers that the present misery would come somehow or other to an end. Up on deck brother Bartholomew, who has developed some grievous complaint of the jaws and teeth—complaint not known to us more particularly, but dreadful enough from that description—does his duty also, with that heroic manfulness that has marked his whole career; and somewhere in the ship young Ferdinand is sheltering from the sprays and breaking seas, finding his world of adventure grown somewhat gloomy and sordid of late, and feeling that he has now had his fill of the sea. . . . Shut your eyes and let the illusions of time and place fade from you; be with them for a moment on this last voyage; hear that eternal foaming and crashing of great waves, the shrieking of wind in cordage, the cracking and slatting of the sails, the mad lashing of loose ropes; the painful swinging, and climbing up and diving down, and sinking and staggering and helpless strivings of the small ship in the waste of water. The sea is as empty as chaos, nothing for days and weeks but that infinite tumbling surface and heaven of grey storm-clouds; a world of salt surges encircled by horizons of dim foam. Time and place are nothing; the agony and pain of such moments are eternal.

But the two brothers, grim and gigantic in their sea



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power, subtle as the wind itself in their sea wit, win the battle. Over the thousands of miles of angry surges they urge that small ship towards calm and safety; until one day the sea begins to abate a little, and through the spray and tumult of waters the dim loom of land is seen. The sea falls back disappointed and finally conquered by Christopher Columbus, whose ship, battered, crippled, and strained, comes back out of the wilderness of waters and glides quietly into the smooth harbour of San Lucar, November 7, 1504. There were no guns or bells to greet the Admiral; his only salute was in the thunder of the conquered seas; and he was carried ashore to San Lucar, and thence to Seville, a sick and broken man.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE LAST DAYS

COLUMBUS, for whom rest and quiet were the first essentials, remained in Seville from November 1504 to May 1505, when he joined the Court at Segovia and afterwards at Salamanca and Valladolid, where he remained till his death in May 1506. During this last period, when all other activities were practically impossible to him, he fell into a state of letter-writing—for the most part long, wearisome complainings and explainings in which he poured out a copious flood of tears and self-pity for the loss of his gold.

It has generally been claimed that Columbus was in bitter penury and want of money, but a close examination of the letters and other documents relating to this time show that in his last days he was not poor in any true sense of the word. He was probably a hundred times richer than any of his ancestors had ever been; he had money to give and money to spend; the banks honoured his drafts; his credit was apparently indisputable. But compared with the fabulous wealth to which he would by this time have been entitled if his original agreement with the Crown of Spain had been faithfully carried out he was no doubt poor. There is

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no evidence that he lacked any comfort or alleviation that money could buy; indeed he never had any great craving for the things that money can buy—only for money itself. There must have been many rich people in Spain who would gladly have entertained him in luxury and dignity; but he was not the kind of man to set much store by such things except in so far as they were a decoration and advertisement of his position as a great man. He had set himself to the single task of securing what he called his rights; and in these days of sunset he seems to have been illumined by some glimmer of the early glory of his first inspiration. He wanted the payment of his dues now, not so much for his own enrichment, but as a sign to the world that his great position as Admiral and Viceroy was recognised, so that his dignities and estates might be established and consolidated in a form which he would be able to transmit to his remote posterity.

Since he wrote so copiously and so constantly in these last days, the best picture of his mood and condition is afforded in his letters to his son Diego; letters which, in spite of their infinitely wearisome recapitulation and querulous complaint, should be carefully read by those who wish to keep in touch with the Admiral to the end.

*Letter written by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS to DON DIEGO,  
his Son, November 21, 1504.*

“VERY DEAR SON,—I received your letter by the courier. You did well in remaining yonder to remedy our affairs

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somewhat and to employ yourself now in our business. Ever since I came to Castile, the Lord Bishop of Palencia has shown me favour and has desired that I should be honoured. Now he must be entreated that it may please him to occupy himself in remedying my many grievances and in ordering that the agreement and letters of concession which their Highnesses gave me be fulfilled, and that I be indemnified for so many damages. And he may be certain that if their Highnesses do this, their estate and greatness will be multiplied to them in an incredible degree. And it must not appear to him that forty thousand pesos in gold is more than a representation of it, because they might have had a much greater quantity if Satan had not hindered it by impeding my design ; for, when I was taken away from the Indies, I was prepared to give them a sum of gold incomparable to forty thousand pesos. I make oath, and this may be for thee alone, that the damage to me in the matter of the concessions their Highnesses have made to me, amounts to ten millions each year, and never can be made good. You see what will be, or is, the injury to their Highnesses in what belongs to them, and they do not perceive it. I write at their disposal and will strive to start yonder. My arrival and the rest is in the hands of our Lord. His mercy is infinite. What is done and is to be done, St. Augustine says is already done before the creation of the world. I write also to these other Lords named in the letter of Diego Mendez. Commend me to their mercy and tell them of my going as I have said above. For certainly I feel great fear, as the cold is so inimical to this, my infirmity, that I may have to remain on the road.

“I was very much pleased to hear the contents of your letter and what the King our Lord said, for which you kissed his royal hands. It is certain that I have served their Highnesses with as much diligence and love as though it had been to gain Paradise, and more, and if I have been at fault in anything it has been because it was impossible or



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because my knowledge and strength were not sufficient. God, our Lord, in such a case, does not require more from persons than the will.

“At the request of the Treasurer Morales, I left two brothers in the Indies, who are called Porras. The one was captain and the other auditor. Both were without capacity for these positions : and I was confident that they could fill them, because of love for the person who sent them to me. They both became more vain than they had been. I forgave them many incivilities, more than I would do with a relation, and their offences were such that they merited another punishment than a verbal reprimand. Finally they reached such a point that even had I desired, I could not have avoided doing what I did. The records of the case will prove whether I lie or not. They rebelled on the island of Jamaica, at which I was as much astonished as I would be if the sun's rays should cast darkness. I was at the point of death, and they martyred me with extreme cruelty during five months and without cause. Finally I took them all prisoners, and immediately set them free, except the captain, whom I was bringing as a prisoner to their Highnesses. A petition which they made to me under oath, and which I send you with this letter, will inform you at length in regard to this matter, although the records of the case explain it fully. These records and the Notary are coming on another vessel, which I am expecting from day to day. The Governor in Santo Domingo took this prisoner. His courtesy constrained him to do this. I had a chapter in my instructions in which their Highnesses ordered all to obey me, and that I should exercise civil and criminal justice over all those who were with me : but this was of no avail with the Governor, who said that it was not understood as applying in his territory. He sent the prisoner to these Lords who have charge of the Indies without inquiry or record or writing. They did not receive him, and both brothers go free. It is not wonderful to me



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that our Lord punishes. They went there with shameless faces. Such wickedness or such cruel treason were never heard of. I wrote to their Highnesses about this matter in the other letter, and said that it was not right for them to consent to this offence. I also wrote to the Lord Treasurer that I begged him as a favour not to pass sentence on the testimony given by these men until he heard me. Now it will be well for you to remind him of it anew. I do not know how they dare to go before him with such an undertaking. I have written to him about it again and have sent him the copy of the oath, the same as I send to you and likewise to Doctor Angulo and the Licentiate Zapata. I commend myself to the mercy of all, with the information that my departure yonder will take place in a short time.

"I would be glad to receive a letter from their Highnesses and to know what they order. You must procure such a letter if you see the means of so doing. I also commend myself to the Lord Bishop and to Juan Lopez, with the reminder of illness and of the reward for my services.

"You must read the letters which go with this one in order to act in conformity with what they say. Acknowledge the receipt of his letter to Diego Mendez. I do not write him as he will learn everything from you, and also because my illness prevents it.

"It would be well for Carbajal and Jeronimo<sup>1</sup> to be at the Court at this time, and talk of our affairs with these Lords and with the Secretary.

"Done in Seville, November 21.

"Your father who loves you more than himself.

. S .

. S . A . S .

X M Y

Xpo FERENS."

<sup>1</sup> Jeronimo de Agüero, a landowner in Española and a friend of Columbus.



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"I wrote again to their Highnesses entreating them to order that these people who went with me should be paid, because they are poor and it is three years since they left their homes. The news which they bring is more than extraordinary. They have endured infinite dangers and hardships. I did not wish to rob the country, so as not to cause scandal, because reason advises its being populated, and then gold will be obtained freely without scandal. Speak of this to the Secretary and to the Lord Bishop and to Juan Lopez and to whomever you think it advisable to do so."

The Bishop of Palencia referred to in this letter is probably Bishop Fonseca—probably, because it is known that he did become Bishop of Palencia, although there is a difference of opinion among historians as to whether the date of his translation to that see was before or after this letter. No matter, except that one is glad to think that an old enemy—for Fonseca and Columbus had bitter disagreements over the fitting out of various expeditions—had shown himself friendly at last.

*Letter written by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS to DON DIEGO,  
November 28, 1504.*

"VERY DEAR SON,—I received your letters of the 15th of this month. It is eight days since I wrote you and sent the letter by a courier. I enclosed unsealed letters to many other persons, in order that you might see them, and having read them, seal and deliver them. Although this illness of mine troubles me greatly, I am preparing for my departure in every way. I would very much like to receive the reply from their Highnesses and wish you might procure it: and also I wish that their Highnesses would provide

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for the payment of these poor people, who have passed through incredible hardships and have brought them such great news that infinite thanks should be given to God, our Lord, and they should rejoice greatly over it. If I . . .<sup>1</sup> the *Paralipomenon*<sup>2</sup> and the Book of Kings and the *Antiquities* of Josephus, with very many others, will tell what they know of this. I hope in our Lord to depart this coming week, but you must not write less often on that account. I have not heard from Carbajal and Jeronimo. If they are there, commend me to them. The time is such that both Carbajals ought to be at Court, if illness does not prevent them. My regards to Diego Mendez.

"I believe that his truth and efforts will be worth as much as the lies of the Porras brothers. The bearer of this letter is Martin de Gamboa. I am sending by him a letter to Juan Lopez and a letter of credit. Read the letter to Lopez and then give it to him. If you write me, send the letters to Luis de Soria that he may send them wherever I am, because if I go in a litter, I believe it will be by La Plata.<sup>3</sup> May our Lord have you in His holy keeping. Your uncle has been very sick and is now, from trouble with his jaws and his teeth.

"Done in Seville, November 28.

"Your father who loves you more than himself.

.S.

.S.A.S.

X M Y

Xpo FERENS."

Bartholomew Columbus and Ferdinand were remaining with Christopher at Seville; Bartholomew probably very nearly as ill as the Admiral, although we do not hear

<sup>1</sup> Word missing: *miento* is suggested by Navarrete—"If I lie," &c.

<sup>2</sup> The Book of Chronicles.

<sup>3</sup> The old Roman road from Merida to Salamanca.



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so many complaints about it. At any rate Diego, being at Court, was the great mainstay of his father; and you can see the sick man sitting there alone with his grievances, and looking to the next generation for help in getting them redressed. Diego, it is to be feared, did not receive these letters with so much patience and attention as he might have shown, nor did he write back to his invalid father with the fulness and regularity which the old man craved. It is a fault common to sons. Those who are sons will know that it does not necessarily imply lack of affection on Diego's part; those who are fathers will realise how much Christopher longed for verbal assurance of interest and affection, even though he did not doubt their reality. News of the serious illness of Queen Isabella had evidently reached Columbus, and was the chief topic of public interest.

*Letter written by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS to DON DIEGO,  
his Son, December 1, 1504.*

“VERY DEAR SON,—Since I received your letter of November 15 I have heard nothing from you. I wish that you would write me more frequently. I would like to receive a letter from you each hour. Reason must tell you that now I have no other repose. Many couriers come each day, and the news is of such a nature and so abundant that on hearing it all my hair stands on end; it is so contrary to what my soul desires. May it please the Holy Trinity to give health to the Queen, our Lady, that she may settle what has already been placed under discussion. I wrote you by another courier Thursday, eight days ago. The courier must already be on his way back here. I told



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you in that letter that my departure was certain, but that the hope of my arrival there, according to experience, was very uncertain, because my sickness is so bad, and the cold is so well suited to aggravate it, that I could not well avoid remaining in some inn on the road. The litter and everything were ready. The weather became so violent that it appeared impossible to every one to start when it was getting so bad, and that it was better for so well-known a person as myself to take care of myself and try to regain my health rather than place myself in danger. I told you in those letters what I now say, that you decided well in remaining there (at such a time), and that it was right to commence occupying yourself with our affairs; and reason strongly urges this. It appears to me that a good copy should be made of the chapter of that letter which their Highnesses wrote me where they say they will fulfil their promises to me and will place you in possession of everything: and that this copy should be given to them with another writing telling of my sickness, and that it is now impossible for me to go and kiss their Royal feet and hands, and that the Indies are being lost, and are on fire in a thousand places, and that I have received nothing, and am receiving nothing, from the revenues derived from them, and that no one dares to accept or demand anything there for me, and I am living upon borrowed funds. I spent the money which I got there in bringing those people who went with me back to their homes, for it would be a great burden upon my conscience to have left them there and to have abandoned them. This must be made known to the Lord Bishop of Palencia, in whose favour I have so much confidence, and also to the Lord Chamberlain.<sup>1</sup> I believed that Carbajal and Jeronimo would be there at such a time. Our Lord is there, and He will order everything as He knows it to be best for us.

<sup>1</sup> Juan Cabrero, an old friend and protector of Columbus.

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“Carbajal reached here yesterday. I wished to send him immediately with this same order, but he excused himself profusely, saying that his wife was at the point of death. I shall see that he goes, because he knows a great deal about these affairs. I will also endeavour to have your brother and your uncle go to kiss the hands of Their Highnesses, and give them an account of the voyage if my letters are not sufficient. Take good care of your brother. He has a good disposition, and is no longer a boy. Ten brothers would not be too many for you. I never found better friends to right or to left than my brothers. We must strive to obtain the government of the Indies and then the adjustment of the revenues. I gave you a memorandum which told you what part of them belongs to me. What they gave to Carbajal was nothing and has turned to nothing. Whoever desires to do so takes merchandise there, and so the eighth is nothing, because, without contributing the eighth, I could send to trade there without rendering account or going in company with any one. I said a great many times in the past that the contribution of the eighth would come to nothing. The eighth and the rest belongs to me by reason of the concession which their Highnesses made to me, as set forth in the book of my Privileges, and also the third and the tenth. Of the tenth I received nothing, except the tenth of what their Highnesses receive; and it must be the tenth of all the gold and other things which are found and obtained, in whatever manner it may be, within this Admiralship, and the tenth of all the merchandise which goes and comes from there, after the expenses are deducted. I have already said that in the *Book of Privileges* the reason for this and for the rest which is before the Tribunal of the Indies here in Seville, is clearly set forth.

“We must strive to obtain a reply to my letter from their Highnesses, and to have them order that these people be paid. I wrote in regard to this subject four days ago,



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and sent the letter by Martin de Gamboa, and you must have seen the letter of Juan Lopez with your own.

“It is said here that it has been ordered that three or four Bishops of the Indies shall be sent or created, and that this matter is referred to the Lord Bishop of Palencia. After having commended me to his Worship, tell him that I believe it will best serve their Highnesses for me to talk with him before this matter is settled.

“Commend me to Diego Mendez, and show him this letter. My illness permits me to write only at night, because in the daytime my hands are deprived of strength. I believe that a son of Francisco Pinelo will carry this letter. Entertain him well, because he does everything for me that he can, with much love and a cheerful goodwill. The caravel which broke her mast in starting from Santo Domingo has arrived in the Algarves. She brings the records of the case of the Porras brothers. Such ugly things and such grievous cruelty as appear in this matter never were seen. If their Highnesses do not punish it, I do not know who will dare to go out in their service with people.

“To-day is Monday. I will endeavour to have your uncle and brother start to-morrow. Remember to write me very often, and tell Diego Mendez to write at length. Each day messengers go from here yonder. May our Lord have you in His Holy keeping.

“Done in Seville, December 1.

“Your father who loves you as himself.

.S.

.S.A.S.

X M Y

Xpo FERENS.”

The gout from which the Admiral suffered made riding impossible to him, and he had arranged to have

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himself carried to Court on a litter when he was able to move. There is a grim and dismal significance in the particular litter that had been chosen: it was no other than the funeral bier which belonged to the Cathedral of Seville and had been built for Cardinal Mendoza. A minute of the Cathedral Chapter records the granting to Columbus of the use of this strange conveyance; but one is glad to think that he ultimately made his journey in a less grim though more humble method. But what are we to think of the taste of a man who would rather travel in a bier, so long as it had been associated with the splendid obsequies of a cardinal, than in the ordinary litter of every-day use? It is but the old passion for state and splendour thus dismally breaking out again.

He speaks of living on borrowed funds and of having devoted all his resources to the payment of his crew; but that may be taken as an exaggeration. He may have borrowed, but the man who can borrow easily from banks cannot be regarded as a poor man. One is nevertheless grateful for these references, since they commemorate the Admiral's unfailing loyalty to those who shared his hardships, and his unwearied efforts to see that they received what was due to them. Pleasant also are the evidences of warm family affection in those simple words of brotherly love, and the affecting advice to Diego that he should love his brother Ferdinand as Christopher loved Bartholomew. It is a pleasant oasis in this dreary, sordid wailing after thirds and tenths and eighths. Good Diego Mendez, that honourable gentleman, was evidently also at



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Court at this time, honestly striving, we may be sure, to say a good word for the Admiral.

Some time after this letter was written, and before the writing of the next, news reached Seville of the death of Queen Isabella. For ten years her kind heart had been wrung by many sorrows. Her mother had died in 1496; the next year her only son and heir to the crown had followed; and within yet another year had died her favourite daughter, the Queen of Portugal. Her other children were all scattered with the exception of Juana, whose semi-imbecile condition caused her parents an anxiety greater even than that caused by death. As Isabella's life thus closed sombrely in, she applied herself more closely and more narrowly to such pious consolations as were available. News from Flanders of the scandalous scenes between Philip and Juana in the summer of 1504 brought on an illness from which she really never recovered, a kind of feverish distress of mind and body in which her only alleviation was the transaction of such business as was possible for her in the direction of humanity and enlightenment. She still received men of intellect and renown, especially travellers. But she knew that her end was near, and as early as October she had made her will, in which her wishes as to the succession and government of Castile were clearly laid down. There was no mention of Columbus in this will, which afterwards greatly mortified him; but it is possible that the poor Queen had by this time, even against her wish, come to share the opinions of her advisers that the rule of





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Columbus in the West Indies had not brought the most humane and happy results possible to the people there.

During October and November her life thus beat itself away in a succession of duties faithfully performed, tasks duly finished, preparations for the great change duly made. She died, as she would have wished to die, surrounded by friends who loved and admired her, and fortified by the last rites of the Church for her journey into the unknown. Date, November 26, 1504, in the fifty-fourth year of her age.

Columbus had evidently received the news from a public source, and felt mortified that Diego should not have written him a special letter.

*Letter written by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS to DON DIEGO, his Son, December 3, 1504.*

“VERY DEAR SON,—I wrote you at length day before yesterday and sent it by Francisco Pinelo, and with this letter I send you a very full memorandum. I am very much astonished not to receive a letter from you or from any one else, and this astonishment is shared by all who know me. Every one here has letters, and I, who have more reason to expect them, have none. Great care should be taken about this matter. The memorandum of which I have spoken above says enough, and on this account I do not speak more at length here. Your brother and your uncle and Carbajal are going yonder. You will learn from them what is not said here. May our Lord have you in His Holy keeping.

“Done in Seville, December 3.

“Your father who loves you more than himself.

. S.  
. S . A . S .  
X M Y  
X<sup>po</sup> FERENS.”



## ISABELLA OF CASTILE



1971-1972





## THE LAST DAYS

*Document of COLUMBUS addressed to his Son, DIEGO, and intended to accompany the preceding letter.*

“A memorandum for you, my very dear son, Don Diego, of what occurs to me at the present time which must be done :—The principal thing is, affectionately and with great devotion to commend the soul of the Queen, our Lady, to God. Her life was always Catholic and Holy and ready for all the things of His holy service, and for this reason it must be believed that she is in His holy glory and beyond the desires of this rough and wearisome world. Then the next thing is to be watchful and exert one’s self in the service of the King, our Lord, and to strive to keep him from being troubled. His Highness is the head of Christendom. See the proverb which says that when the head aches, all the members ache. So that all good Christians should entreat that he may have long life and health : and those of us who are obliged to serve him more than others must join in this supplication with great earnestness and diligence. This reason prompts me now with my severe illness to write you what I am writing here, that his Highness may dispose matters for his service : and for the better fulfilment I am sending your brother there, who, although he is a child in days, is not a child in understanding ; and I am sending your uncle and Carbajal, so that if this, my writing, is not sufficient, they, together with yourself, can furnish verbal evidence. In my opinion there is nothing so necessary for the service of his Highness as the disposition and remedying of the affair of the Indies.

“His Highness must now have there more than 40,000 or 50,000 gold pieces. I learned when I was there that the Governor had no desire to send it to him. It is believed among the other people as well that there will be 150,000 pesos more, and the mines are very rich and productive. Most of the people there are common and ignorant, and care very little for the circumstances. The Governor is



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very much hated by all of them, and it is to be feared that they may at some time rebel. If this should occur, which God forbid, the remedy for the matter would then be difficult: and so it would be if injustice were used toward them, either here or in other places, with the great fame of the gold. My opinion is that his Highness should investigate this affair quickly and by means of a person who is interested and who can go there with 150 or 200 people well equipped, and remain there until it is well settled and without suspicion, which cannot be done in less than three months: and that an endeavour be made to raise two or three forces there. The gold there is exposed to great risk, as there are very few people to protect it. I say that there is a proverb here which says that the presence of the owner makes the horse fat. Here and wherever I may be, I shall serve their Highnesses with joy, until my soul leaves this body.

“Above I said that his Highness is the head of the Christians, and that it is necessary for him to occupy himself in preserving them and their lands. For this reason people say that he cannot thus provide a good government for all these Indies, and that they are being lost and do not yield a profit, neither are they being handled in a reasonable manner. In my opinion it would serve him to intrust this matter to some one who is distressed over the bad treatment of his subjects.

“I wrote a very long letter to his Highness as soon as I arrived here, fully stating the evils which require a prompt and efficient remedy at once. I have received no reply, nor have I seen any provision made in the matter. Some vessels are detained in San Lucar by the weather. I have told these gentlemen of the Board of Trade that they must order them held until the King, our Lord, makes provision in the matter, either by some person with other people, or by writing. This is very necessary and I know what I say. It is necessary that the authorities should order all the ports searched diligently, to see that no one goes yonder to the Indies without licence. I have already said that



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there is a great deal of gold collected in straw houses without any means of defence, and there are many disorderly people in the country, and that the Governor is hated, and that little punishment is inflicted and has been inflicted upon those who have committed crimes and have come out with their treasonable conduct approved.

“If his Highness decides to make some provision, it must be done at once, so that these vessels may not be injured.

“I have heard that three Bishops are to be elected and sent to Española. If it pleases his Highness to hear me before concluding this matter, I will tell in what manner God our Lord may be well served and his Highness served and satisfied.

“I have given lengthy consideration to the provision for Española.”

Yes, the Queen is in His Holy Glory, and beyond the desires of this rough and wearisome world; but we are not; we are still in a world where fifty thousand gold pieces can be of use to us, and where a word spoken in season, even in such a season of darkness, may have its effect with the King. A strange time to talk to the King about gold; and perhaps Diego was wiser and kinder than his father thought in not immediately taking this strange document to King Ferdinand.

*Letter written by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS to DON DIEGO,  
his Son, December 13, 1504.*

“VERY DEAR SON,—It is now eight days since your uncle and your brother and Carbajal left here together, to kiss the royal hands of his Highness, and to give an account of the voyage, and also to aid you in the negotiation of whatever may prove to be necessary there.





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“Don Ferdinand took from here 150 ducats to be expended at his discretion. He will have to spend some of it, but he will give you what he has remaining. He also carries a letter of credit for these merchants. You will see that it is very necessary to be careful in dealing with them, because I had trouble there with the Governor, as every one told me that I had there 11,000 or 12,000 castellanos, and I had only 4000. He wished to charge me with things for which I am not indebted, and I, confiding in the promise of their Highnesses, who ordered everything restored to me, decided to leave these charges in the hope of calling him to account for them. If any one has money there, they do not dare ask for it, on account of his haughtiness. I very well know that after my departure he must have received more than 5000 castellanos. If it were possible for you to obtain from his Highness an authoritative letter to the Governor, ordering him to send the money without delay and a full account of what belongs to me, by the person I might send there with my power of attorney, it would be well ; because he will not give it in any other manner, neither to my friend Diaz or Velasquez, and they dare not even speak of it to him. Carbajal will very well know how this must be done. Let him see this letter. The 150 ducats which Luis de Soria sent you when I came are paid according to his desire.

“I wrote you at length and sent the letter by Don Ferdinand, also a memorandum. Now that I have thought over the matter further, I say that, since at the time of my departure their Highnesses said over their signature and verbally, that they would give me all that belongs to me, according to my privileges—that the claim for the third or the tenth and eighth mentioned in the memorandum must be relinquished, and instead the chapter of their letter must be shown where they write what I have said, and all that belongs to me must be required, as you have it in writing in the *Book of Privileges*, in which is also set forth the reason for my receiving the third, eighth, and tenth ; as there is always an

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opportunity to reduce the sum desired by a person, although his Highness says in his letter that he wishes to give me all that belongs to me. Carbajal will understand me very well if he sees this letter, and every one else as well, as it is very clear. I also wrote to his Highness and finally reminded him that he must provide at once for this affair of the Indies, that the people there may not be disturbed, and also reminding him of the promise stated above. You ought to see the letter.

“With this letter I send you another letter of credit for the said merchants. I have already explained to you the reasons why expenses should be moderated. Show your uncle due respect, and treat your brother as an elder brother should treat a younger. You have no other brother, and praised be our Lord, he is such a one as you need very much. He has proved and proves to be very intelligent. Honour Carbajal and Jeronimo and Diego Mendez. Commend me to them all. I do not write them as there is nothing to write and this messenger is in haste. It is frequently rumoured here that the Queen, whom God has, has left an order that I be restored to the possession of the Indies. On arrival, the notary of the fleet will send you the records and the original of the case of the Porras brothers. I have received no news from your uncle and brother since they left. The water has been so high here that the river entered the city.

“If Agostin Italian and Francisco de Grimaldo do not wish to give you the money you need, look for others there who are willing to give it to you. On the arrival here of your signature I will at once pay them all that you have received : for at present there is not a person here by whom I can send you money.

“Done to-day, Friday, December 13, 1504.

“Your father who loves you more than himself.

.S.  
.S.A.S.  
X M Y  
Xpo FERENS.”



## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

*Letter written by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS to his Son,  
DON DIEGO, December 21, 1504.*

“VERY DEAR SON,—The Lord Adelantado and your brother and Carbajal left here sixteen days ago to go to the Court. They have not written me since. Don Ferdinand carried 150 ducats. He must spend what is necessary, and he carries a letter, that the merchants may furnish you with money. I have sent you another letter since, with the endorsement of Francisco de Ribarol, by Zamora, the courier, and told you that if you had made provision for yourself by means of my letter, not to use that of Francisco de Ribarol. I say the same now in regard to another letter which I send you with this one, for Francisco Doria, which letter I send you for greater security that you may not fail to be provided with money. I have already told you how necessary it is to be careful in the expenditure of the money, until their Highnesses give us law and justice. I also told you that I had spent 1200 castellanos in bringing these people to Castile, of which his Highness owes me the greater part, and I wrote him in regard to it asking him to order the account settled.

“If possible I should like to receive letters here each day. I complain of Diego Mendez and of Jeronimo, as they do not write me : and then of the others who do not write when they arrive there. We must strive to learn whether the Queen, whom God has in His keeping, said anything about me in her will, and we must hurry the Lord Bishop of Palencia, who caused the possession of the Indies by their Highnesses and my remaining in Castile, for I was already on my way to leave it. And the Lord Chamberlain of his Highness must also be hurried. If by chance the affair comes to discussion, you must strive to have them see the writing which is in the *Book of Privileges*, which shows the reason why the third, eighth, and tenth are owing me, as I told you in another letter.

## THE LAST DAYS

"I have written to the Holy Father in regard to my voyage, as he complained of me because I did not write him. I send you a copy of the letter. I would like to have the King, our Lord, or the Lord Bishop of Palencia see it before I send the letter, in order to avoid false representations.

"Camacho has told a thousand falsehoods about me. To my regret I ordered him arrested. He is in the church. He says that after the Holidays are past, he will go there if he is able. If I owe him, he must show by what reason; for I make oath that I do not know it, nor is it true.

"If without importunity a licence can be procured for me to go on mule-back, I will try to leave for the Court after January, and I will even go without this licence. But haste must be made that the loss of the Indies, which is now imminent, may not take place. May our Lord have you in His keeping.

"Done to-day, December 21.

"Your father who loves you more than himself.

.S.

.S.A.S.

X M Y

Xpo FERENS."

"This tenth which they give me is not the tenth which was promised me. The *Privileges* tell what it is, and there is also due me the tenth of the profit derived from merchandise and from all other things, of which I have received nothing. Carbajal understands me well. Also remind Carbajal to obtain a letter from his Highness for the Governor, directing him to send his accounts and the money I have there, at once. And it would be well that a *Repostero* of his Highness should go there to receive this money, as there must be a large amount due me. I will strive to have these gentlemen of the Board of Trade send also to say to the Governor that he must send my share together with the gold belonging to their Highnesses. But

## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

the remedy for the other matter must not be neglected there on this account. I say that 7000 or 8000 pesos must have passed to my credit there, which sum has been received since I left, besides the other money which was not given to me.

“To my very dear son Don Diego  
at the Court.”

All this struggling for the due payment of eighths and tenths makes wearisome reading, and we need not follow the Admiral into his distinctions between one kind of tenth and another. There is something to be said on his side, it must be remembered; the man had not received what was due to him; and although he was not in actual poverty, his only property in this world consisted of these very thirds and eighths and tenths. But if we are inclined to think poorly of the Admiral for his dismal pertinacity, what are we to think of the people who took advantage of their high position to ignore consistently the just claims made upon them?

There is no end to the Admiral's letter-writing at this time. Fortunately for us his letter to the Pope has been lost, or else we should have to insert it here; and we have had quite enough of his theological stupors. As for the Queen's will, there was no mention of the Admiral in it; and her only reference to the Indies showed that she had begun to realise some of the disasters following his rule there, for the provisions that are concerned with the New World refer exclusively to the treatment of the

## THE LAST DAYS

natives, to whose succour, long after they were past succour, the hand of Isabella was stretched out from the grave. The licence to travel on mule-back which the Admiral asked for was made necessary by a law which had been passed forbidding the use of mules for this purpose throughout Spain. There had been a scarcity of horses for mounting the royal cavalry, and it was thought that the breeding of horses had been neglected on account of the greater cheapness and utility of mules. It was to encourage the use and breeding of horses that an interdict was laid on the use of mules, and only the very highest persons in the land were allowed to employ them.

*Letter written by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS to his Son,  
DON DIEGO, December 29, 1504.*

“VERY DEAR SON,—I wrote you at length and sent it by Don Ferdinand, who left to go yonder twenty-three days ago to-day, with the Lord Adelantado and Carbajal, from whom I have since heard nothing. Sixteen days ago to-day I wrote you and sent it by Zamora, the courier, and I sent you a letter of credit for these merchants endorsed by Francisco de Ribarol, telling them to give you the money you might ask for. And then, about eight days ago, I sent you by another courier a letter endorsed by Francisco Soria, and these letters are directed to Pantaleon and Agostin Italian, that they may give it to you. And with these letters goes a copy of a letter which I wrote to the Holy Father in regard to the affairs of the Indies, that he might not complain of me any more. I sent this copy for his Highness to see, or the Lord Bishop of Palencia, so as to avoid false representations. The payment of the people who went with me has been delayed. I have provided for them here what I have been able. They are

## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

poor and obliged to go in order to earn a living. They decided to go yonder. They have been told here that they will be dealt with as favourably as possible, and this is right, although among them there are some who merit punishment more than favours. This is said of the rebels. I gave these people a letter for the Lord Bishop of Palencia. Read it, and if it is necessary for them to go and petition his Highness, urge your uncle and brother and Carbajal to read it also, so that you can all help them as much as possible. It is right and a work of mercy, for no one ever earned money with so many dangers and hardships and no one has ever rendered such great service as these people. It is said that Camacho and Master Bernal wish to go there—two creatures for whom God works few miracles : but if they go, it will be to do harm rather than good. They can do little because the truth always prevails, as it did in Española, from which wicked people by means of falsehoods have prevented any profit being received up to the present time. It is said that this Master Bernal was the beginning of the treason. He was taken and accused of many misdemeanours, for each one of which he deserved to be quartered. At the request of your uncle and of others he was pardoned, on condition that if he ever said the least word against me and my state the pardon should be revoked and he should be under condemnation. I send you a copy of the case in this letter. I send you a legal document about Camacho. For more than eight days he has not left the church on account of his rash statements and falsehoods. He has a will made by Terreros, and other relatives of the latter have another will of more recent date, which renders the first will null, as far as the inheritance is concerned : and I am entreated to enforce the latter will, so that Camacho will be obliged to restore what he has received. I shall order a legal document drawn up and served upon him, because I believe it is a work of mercy to punish him, as he is so unbridled in his speech that some one must punish him without the rod: and it will not be so much against the



## THE LAST DAYS

conscience of the chastiser, and will injure him more. Diego Mendez knows Master Bernal and his works very well. The Governor wished to imprison him at Española and left him to my consideration. It is said that he killed two men there with medicines in revenge for something of less account than three beans. I would be glad of the licence to travel on mule-back and of a good mule, if they can be obtained without difficulty. Consult all about our affairs, and tell them that I do not write them in particular on account of the great pain I feel when writing. I do not say that they must do the same, but that each one must write me and very often, for I feel great sorrow that all the world should have letters from there each day, and I have nothing, when I have so many people there. Commend me to the Lord Adelantado in his favour, and give my regards to your brother and to all the others.

“Done at Seville, December 29.

“Your father who loves you more than himself.

.S.

.S.A.S.

X M Y

Xpo FERENS.”

“I say further that if our affairs are to be settled according to conscience, that the chapter of the letter which their Highnesses wrote me when I departed, in which they say they will order you placed in possession, must be shown; and the writing must also be shown which is in the *Book of Privileges*, which shows how in reason and in justice the third and eighth and the tenth are mine. There will always be opportunity to make reductions from this amount.”

Columbus's requests were not all for himself; nothing could be more sincere or generous than the spirit in which he always strove to secure the just payment of his mariners.



## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Otherwise he is still concerned with the favour shown to those who were treasonable to him. Camacho was still hiding in a church, probably from the wrath of Bartholomew Columbus; but Christopher has more subtle ways of punishment. A legal document, he considers, will be better than a rod; "it will not be so much against the conscience of the chastiser, and will injure him (the chastised) more."

*Letter written by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS to DON DIEGO, his Son, January 18, 1505.*

"VERY DEAR SON,—I wrote you at length by the courier who will arrive there to-day, and sent you a letter for the Lord Chamberlain. I intended to inclose in it a copy of that chapter of the letter from their Highnesses in which they say they will order you placed in possession; but I forgot to do it here. Zamora, the courier, came. I read your letter and also those of your uncle and brother and Carbajal, and felt great pleasure in learning that they had arrived well, as I had been very anxious about them. Diego Mendez will leave here in three or four days with the order of payment prepared. He will take a long statement of everything and I will write to Juan Velasquez. I desire his friendship and service. I believe that he is a very honourable gentleman. If the Lord Bishop of Palencia has come, or comes, tell him how much pleased I have been with his prosperity, and that if I go there I must stop with his Worship even if he does not wish it, and that we must return to our first fraternal love. And that he could not refuse it because my service will force him to have it thus. I said that the letter for the Holy Father was sent that his Worship might see it if he was there, and also the Lord Archbishop of Seville, as the King might not have opportunity to read it. I have already told you that the petition to their Highnesses

## THE LAST DAYS

must be for the fulfilment of what they wrote me about the possession and of the rest which was promised me. I said that this chapter of the letter must be shown them and said that it must not be delayed, and that this is advisable for an infinite number of reasons. His Highness may believe that, however much he gives me, the increase of his exalted dominions and revenue will be in the proportion of 100 to 1, and that there is no comparison between what has been done and what is to be done. The sending of a Bishop to Española must be delayed until I speak to his Highness. It must not be as in the other cases when it was thought to mend matters and they were spoiled. There have been some cold days here and they have caused me great fatigue and fatigue me now. Commend me to the favour of the Lord Adelantado. May our Lord guard and bless you and your brother. Give my regards to Carbajal and Jeronimo. Diego Mendez will carry a full pouch there. I believe that the affair of which you wrote can be very easily managed. The vessels from the Indies have not arrived from Lisbon. They brought a great deal of gold, and none for me. So great a mockery was never seen, for I left there 60,000 pesos smelted. His Highness should not allow so great an affair to be ruined, as is now taking place. He now sends to the Governor a new provision. I do not know what it is about. I expect letters each day. Be very careful about expenditures, for it is necessary.

"Done January 18.

"Your father who loves you more than himself.

.S.

.S.A.S.

X M Y

Xpo FERENS./"

There is playful reference here to Fonseca, with whom Columbus was evidently now reconciled; and he was to



## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

be buttonholed and made to read the Admiral's letter to the Pope. Diego Mendez is about to start, and is to make a "long statement"; and in the meantime the Admiral will write as many long letters as he has time for. Was there no friend at hand, I wonder, with wit enough to tell the Admiral that every word he wrote about his grievances was sealing his doom, so far as the King was concerned? No human being could have endured with patience this continuous heavy firing at long range to which the Admiral subjected his friends at Court; every post that arrived was loaded with a shrapnel of grievances, the dull echo of which must have made the ears of those who heard it echo with weariness. Things were evidently humming in Española; large cargoes of negroes had been sent out to take the place of the dead natives, and under the harsh driving of Ovando the mines were producing heavily. The vessels that arrived from the Indies brought a great deal of gold; "but none for me."

*Letter written by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS to his Son,  
DON DIEGO, February 5, 1505.*

"VERY DEAR SON,—Diego Mendez left here Monday, the 3rd of this month. After his departure I talked with Amerigo Vespucci, the bearer of this letter, who is going yonder, where he is called in regard to matters of navigation. He was always desirous of pleasing me. He is a very honourable man. Fortune has been adverse to him as it has been to many others. His labours have not profited him as much as reason demands. He goes for me, and is very desirous of doing something to benefit me

## THE LAST DAYS

if it is in his power. I do not know of anything in which I can instruct him to my benefit, because I do not know what is wanted of him there. He is going with the determination to do everything for me in his power. See what he can do to profit me there, and strive to have him do it; for he will do everything, and will speak and will place it in operation: and it must all be done secretly so that there may be no suspicion.

"I have told him all that could be told regarding this matter, and have informed him of the payment which has been made to me and is being made. This letter is for the Lord Adelantado also, that he may see how Amerigo Vespucci can be useful, and advise him about it. His Highness may believe that his ships went to the best and richest of the Indies, and if anything remains to be learned more than has been told, I will give the information yonder verbally, because it is impossible to give it in writing. May our Lord have you in his Holy keeping.

"Done in Seville, February 5.

"Your father who loves you more than himself.

. S .  
. S . A . S .  
X M Y  
Xρρ FERENS."

This letter has a significance which raises it out of the ruck of this complaining correspondence. Amerigo Vespucci had just returned from his long voyage in the West, when he had navigated along an immense stretch of the coast of America, both north and south, and had laid the foundations of a fame which was, for a time at least, to eclipse that of Columbus. Probably neither of the two men realised it at this interview, or Columbus



## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

would hardly have felt so cordially towards the man who was destined to rob him of so much glory. As a matter of fact the practical Spaniards were now judging entirely by results; and a year or two later, when the fame of Columbus had sunk to insignificance, he was merely referred to as the discoverer of certain islands, while Vespucci, who after all had only followed in his lead, was hailed as the discoverer of a great continent. Vespucci has been unjustly blamed for this state of affairs, although he could no more control the public estimate of his services than Columbus could. He was a more practical man than Columbus, and he made a much better impression on really wise and intelligent men; and his discoveries were immediately associated with trade and colonial development, while Columbus had little to show for his discoveries during his lifetime but a handful of gold dust and a few cargoes of slaves. At any rate it was a graceful act on the part of Vespucci, whose star was in the ascendant, to go and seek out the Admiral, whose day was fast verging to night; it was one of those disinterested actions that live and have a value of their own, and that shine out happily amid the surrounding murk and confusion.

*Letter signed by CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS to DON DIEGO, his Son, February 25, 1505.*

“VERY DEAR SON,—The Licentiate de Zea is a person whom I desire to honour. He has in his charge two men who are under prosecution at the hands of justice, as shown



## THE LAST DAYS

by the information which is inclosed in this letter. See that Diego Mendez places the said petition with the others, that they may be given to his Highness during Holy Week for pardon. If the pardon is granted, it is well, and if not, look for some other manner of obtaining it. May our Lord have you in His Holy keeping. Done in Seville, February 25, 1505. I wrote you and sent it by Amerigo Vespucci. See that he sends you the letter unless you have already received it.

“Your father.

Xpo FERENS.//”

This is the last letter of Columbus known to us—otherwise an entirely unimportant document, dealing with the most transient affairs. With it we gladly bring to an end this exposure of a greedy and querulous period, which speaks so eloquently for itself that the less we say and comment on it the better.

In the month of May the Admiral was well enough at last to undertake the journey to Segovia. He travelled on a mule, and was accompanied by his brother Bartholomew and his son Ferdinand. When he reached the Court he found the King civil and outwardly attentive to his recitals, but apparently content with a show of civility and outward attention. Columbus was becoming really a nuisance; that is the melancholy truth. The King had his own affairs to attend to; he was already meditating a second marriage, and thinking of the young bride he was to bring home to the vacant place of Isabella; and the very



## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

iteration of Columbus's complaints and demands had made them lose all significance for the King. He waved them aside with polite and empty promises, as people do the demands of importunate children; and finally, to appease the Admiral and to get rid of the intolerable nuisance of his applications, he referred the whole question, first to Archbishop Deza, and then to the body of councillors which had been appointed to interpret Queen Isabella's will. The whole question at issue was whether or not the original agreement with Columbus, which had been made before his discoveries, should be carried out. The King, who had foolishly subscribed to it simply as a matter of form, never believing that anything much could come of it, was determined that it should not be carried out, as it would give Columbus a wealth and power to which no mere subject of a crown was entitled. The Admiral held fast to his privileges; the only thing that he would consent to submit to arbitration was the question of his revenues; but his titles and territorial authorities he absolutely stuck to. Of course the council did exactly what the King had done. They talked about the thing a great deal, but they did nothing. Columbus was an invalid and broken man, who might die any day, and it was obviously to their interest to gain time by discussion and delay—a cruel game for our Christopher, who knew his days on earth to be numbered, and who struggled in that web of time in which mortals try to hurry the events of the present and delay the events of the future.


Meanwhile Philip of Austria and his wife Juana,








FORNIA OF 700



FERDINAND OF ARRAGON



## THE LAST DAYS

Isabella's daughter, had arrived from Flanders to assume the crown of Castile, which Isabella had bequeathed to them. Columbus saw a chance for himself in this coming change, and he sent Bartholomew as an envoy to greet the new Sovereigns, and to enlist their services on the Admiral's behalf. Bartholomew was very well received, but he was too late to be of use to the Admiral, whom he never saw again; and this is our farewell to Bartholomew, who passes out of our narrative here. He went to Rome after Christopher's death on a mission to the Pope concerning some fresh voyages of discovery; and in 1508 he made, so far as we know, his one excursion into romance, when he assisted at the production of an illegitimate little girl—his only descendant. He returned to Española under the governorship of his nephew Diego, and died there in 1514—stern, valiant, brotherly soul, whose devotion to Christopher must be for ever remembered and honoured with the name of the Admiral.

From Segovia Columbus followed the Court to Salamanca and thence to Valladolid, where his increasing illness kept him a prisoner after the Court had left to greet Philip and Juana. He had been in attendance upon it for nearly a year, and without any results: and now, as his infirmity increased, he turned to the settling of his own affairs, and drawing up of wills and codicils—all very elaborate and precise. In these occupations his worldly affairs were duly rounded off; and on May 19, 1506,



## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

having finally ratified a will which he had made in Segovia a year before, in which the descent of his honours was entailed upon Diego and his heirs, or failing him Ferdinand and his heirs, or failing him Bartholomew and his heirs, he turned to the settlement of his soul.

His illness had increased gradually but surely, and he must have known that he was dying. He was not without friends, among them the faithful Diego Mendez, his son Ferdinand, and a few others. His lodging was in a small house in an unimportant street of Valladolid, now called the "Calle de Colon"; the house, No. 7, still standing, and to be seen by curious eyes. As the end approached, the Admiral, who was being attended by Franciscan monks, had himself clothed in a Franciscan habit; and so, on the 20th May 1506, he lay upon his bed, breathing out his life.

. . . And as strange thoughts  
Grow with a certain humming in my ears,  
About the life before I lived this life,  
And this life too, Popes, Cardinals, and priests,  
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes  
And new-found agate urns fresh as day . . .

. . . we do not know what his thoughts were, as the shadows grew deeper about him, as the sounds of the world, the noises from the sunny street, grew fainter, and the images and sounds of memory clearer and louder. Perhaps as he lay there with closed eyes he remembered things long forgotten, as dying people do; sounds and smells of the Vico Dritto di Ponticelli, and the feel of

## THE LAST DAYS

the hot paving-stones down which his childish feet used to run to the sea; noises of the sea also, the drowning swish of waters and sudden roar of breakers sounding to anxiously strained ears in the still night; bright sunlit pictures of far-away tropical shores, with handsome olive figures glistening in the sun; the sight of strange faces, the sound of strange speech, the smell of a strange land; the glitter of gold; the sudden death-shriek breaking the stillness of some sylvan glade; the sight of blood on the grass. . . . The Admiral's face undergoes a change; there is a stir in the room; some one signs to the priest Gaspar, who brings forth his sacred wafer and holy oils and administers the last sacraments. The wrinkled eyelids flutter open, the sea-worn voice feebly frames the responses; the dying eyes are fixed on the crucifix; and —“*In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum.*” The Admiral is dead.

He was in his fifty-sixth year, already an old man in body and mind; and his death went entirely unmarked except by his immediate circle of friends. Even Peter Martyr, who was in Valladolid just before and just after it, and who was writing a series of letters to various correspondents giving all the news of his day, never thought it worth while to mention that Christopher Columbus was dead. His life flickered out in the completest obscurity. It is not even known where he was first buried; but probably it was in the Franciscan convent

## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

at Valladolid. This, however, was only a temporary resting-place; and a few years later his body was formally interred in the choir of the monastery of Las Cuevas at Seville, there to lie for thirty years surrounded by continual chauntings. After that it was translated to the cathedral in San Domingo; rested there for 250 years, and then, on the cession of that part of the island to France, the body was removed to Cuba. But the Admiral was by this time nothing but a box of bones and dust, as also were brother Bartholomew and son Diego, and Diego's son, all collected together in that place. There were various examinations of the bone-boxes; one, supposed to be the Admiral's, was taken to Cuba and solemnly buried there; and lately, after the conquest of the island in the Spanish-American War, this box of bones was elaborately conveyed to Seville, where it now rests.

But in the meanwhile the Chapter of the cathedral in San Domingo had made new discoveries and examinations; had found another box of bones, which bore to them authentic signs that the dust it contained was the Admiral's and not his grandson's; and in spite of the Academy of History at Madrid, it is indeed far from unlikely that the Admiral's dust does not lie in Spain or Cuba, but in San Domingo still. Whole books have been written about these boxes of bones; learned societies have argued about them, experts have examined the bones and the boxes with microscopes; and meantime the dust of Columbus, if we take the view that an error was committed in the transference to Cuba, is not even collected

THE HOUSE AT VALLADOLID WHERE COLUMBUS DIED



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all in one box. A sacrilegious official acquired some of it when the boxes were opened, and distributed it among various curiosity-hunters, who have preserved it in caskets of crystal and silver. Thus a bit of him is worn by an American lady in a crystal locket; a pinch of him lies in a glass vial in a New York mansion; other pinches in the Lennox Library, New York, in the Vatican, and in the University of Pavia. In such places, if the Admiral should fail to appear at the first note of their trumpets, must the Angels of the Resurrection make search.



## CHAPTER X

### THE MAN COLUMBUS

**I**T is not in any leaden box or crystal vase that we must search for the true remains of Christopher Columbus. Through these pages we have traced, so far as has been possible, the course of his life, and followed him in what he did; all of which is but preparation for our search for the true man, and just estimate of what he was. We have seen, dimly, what his youth was; that he came of poor people who were of no importance to the world at large; that he earned his living as a working man; that he became possessed of an Idea; that he fought manfully and diligently until he had realised it; and that then he found himself in a position beyond his powers to deal with, not being a strong enough swimmer to hold his own in the rapid tide of events which he himself had set flowing; and we have seen him sinking at last in that tide, weighed down by the very things for which he had bargained and stipulated. If these pages had been devoted to a critical examination of the historical documents on which his life-story is based we should also have found that he continually told lies about himself, and misrepresented facts when the truth proved inconvenient to him; that

## THE MAN COLUMBUS

he was vain and boastful to a degree that can only excite our compassion. He was naturally and sincerely pious, and drew from his religion much strength and spiritual nourishment; but he was also capable of hypocrisy, and of using the self-same religion as a cloak for his greed and cruelty. What is the final image that remains in our minds of such a man?

To answer this question we must examine his life in three dimensions. There was its great outline of rise, zenith, and decline; there was its outward history in minute detail, and its conduct in varying circumstances; and there was the inner life of the man's soul, which was perhaps simpler than some of us think. And first, as to his life as a single thing. It rose in poverty, it reached a brief and dazzling zenith of glory, it set in clouds and darkness; the fame of it suffered a long night of eclipse, from which it was rescued and raised again to a height of glory which unfortunately was insufficiently founded on fact; and as a reaction from this, it has been in danger of becoming entirely discredited, and the man himself denounced as a fraud. The reason for these surprising changes is that in those fifty-five years granted to Columbus for the making of his life he did not consistently listen to that inner voice which alone can hold a man on any constructive path. He listened to it at intervals, and he drew his inspiration from it; but he shut his ears when it had served him, when it had brought him what he wanted. In his moments of success he guided himself by outward things; and thus



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he was at one moment a seer and ready to be a martyr, and at the next moment he was an opportunist, watching to see which way the wind would blow, and ready to trim his sails in the necessary direction. Such conduct of a man's life does not make for single light or for true greatness; rather for dim, confused lights, and lofty heights obscured in cloud.

If we examine his life in detail we find this alternating principle of conduct revealed throughout it. He was by nature clever, kind-hearted, rather large-souled, affectionate, and not very honest; all the acts prompted by his nature bear the stamp of these qualities. To them his early years had probably added little except piety, sharp practice, and that uncomfortable sense, often bred amid narrow and poor surroundings, that one must keep a sharp look-out for oneself if one is to get a share of the world's good things. Something in his blood, moreover, craved for dignity and the splendour of high-sounding titles; craved for power also, and the fulfilment of an arrogant pride. All these things were in his Ligurian blood, and he breathed them in with the very air of Genoa. His mind was of the receptive rather than of the constructive kind, and it was probably through those long years spent between sea voyages and brief sojourns with his family in Genoa or Savona that he conceived that vague Idea which, as I have tried to show, formed the impulse of his life during its brief initiative period. Having once received this Idea of discovery—and like all other great ideas, it was in the air at the

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time and was bound to take shape in some human brain—he had all his native and personal qualities to bring to its support. The patience to await its course he had learned from his humble and subordinate life. The ambition to work for great rewards was in his blood and race; and to belief in himself, his curious vein of mystical piety was able to add the support of a ready belief in divine selection. This very time of waiting and endurance of disappointments also helped to cultivate in his character two separate qualities—an endurance or ability to withstand infinite hardship and disappointment; and also a greedy pride that promised itself great rewards for whatever should be endured.

In all active matters Columbus was what we call a lucky man. It was luck that brought him to Guanahani; and throughout his life this element of good luck continually helped him. He was lucky, that is to say, in his relation with inanimate things; but in his relations with men he was almost as consistently unlucky. First of all he was probably a bad judge of men. His humble origin and his lack of education naturally made him distrustful. He trusted people whom he should have regarded with suspicion, and he was suspicious of those whom he ought to have known he could trust. If people pleased him, he elevated them with absurd rapidity to stations far beyond their power to fill, and then wondered that they sometimes turned upon him; if they



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committed crimes against him, he either sought to regain their favour by forgiving them, or else dogged them with a nagging, sulky resentment, and expected every one else to punish them also. He could manage men if he were in the midst of them; there was something winning as well as commanding about his actual presence, and those who were devoted to him would have served him to the death. But when he was not on the spot all his machineries and affairs went to pieces; he had no true organising ability; no sooner did he take his hand off any affair for which he was responsible than it immediately came to confusion. All these defects are to be attributed to his lack of education and knowledge of the world. Mental discipline is absolutely necessary for a man who would discipline others; and knowledge of the world is essential for one who would successfully deal with men, and distinguish those whom he can from those whom he cannot trust. Defects of this nature, which sometimes seem like flaws in the man's character, may be set down to this one disability—that he was not educated and was not by habit a man of the world.

All his sins of misgovernment, then, may be condoned on the ground that governing is a science, and that Columbus had never learned it. What we do find, however, is that the inner light that had led him across the seas never burned clearly for him again, and was never his guide in the later part of his life. Its radiance was



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quenched by the gleam of gold ; for there is no doubt that Columbus was a victim of that baleful influence which has caused so much misery in this world. He was greedy of gold for himself undoubtedly ; but he was still more greedy of it for Spain. It was his ambition to be the means of filling the coffers of the Spanish Sovereigns and so acquiring immense dignity and glory for himself. He believed that gold was in itself a very precious and estimable thing ; he knew that masses and candles could be bought for it, and very real spiritual privileges ; and as he made blunder after blunder, and saw evil after evil heaping itself on his record in the New World, he became the more eager and frantic to acquire such a treasure of gold that it would wipe out the other evils of his administration. And once involved in that circle, there was no help for him.

The man himself was a simple man ; capable, when the whole of his various qualities were directed upon one single thing, of that greatness which is the crown of simplicity. Ambition was the keynote of his life ; not an unworthy keynote, by any means, if only the ambition be sound ; but one serious defect of Columbus's ambition was that it was retrospective rather than perspective. He may have had, before he sailed from Palos, an ambition to be the discoverer of a New World ; but I do not think he had. He believed there were islands or land to be discovered in the West if only he pushed on far enough ; and he was ambitious to find them and vindicate his belief. Afterwards, when he had read a little more, and when he conceived the plan of pretending that he had all along meant



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to discover the Indies and a new road to the East, he acted in accordance with that pretence; he tried to make his acts appear retrospectively as though they had been prompted by a design quite different from that by which they had really been prompted. When he found that his discovery was regarded as a great scientific feat, he made haste to pretend that it had all along been meant as such, and was in fact the outcome of an elaborate scientific theory. In all this there is nothing for praise or admiration. It indicates the presence of moral disease; but fortunately it is functional rather than organic disease. He was right and sound at heart; but he spread his sails too readily to the great winds of popular favour, and the result was instability to himself, and often danger of shipwreck to his soul.

The ultimate test of a man's character is how he behaves in certain circumstances when there is no great audience to watch him, and when there is no sovereign close at hand with bounties and rewards to offer. In a word, what matters most is a man's behaviour, not as an admiral, or a discoverer, or a viceroy, or a courtier, but as a man. In this respect Columbus's character rings true. If he was little on little occasions, he was also great on great occasions. The inner history of his fourth voyage, if we could but know it and could take all the circumstances into account, would probably reveal a degree of heroic endurance that has never been surpassed in the

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history of mankind. Put him as a man face to face with a difficulty, with nothing but his wits to devise with and his two hands to act with, and he is never found wanting. And that is the kind of man of whom discoverers are made. The mere mathematician may work out the facts with the greatest accuracy and prove the existence of land at a certain point; but there is great danger that he may be knocked down by a club on his first landing on the beach, and never bring home any news of his discovery. The great courtier may do well for himself and keep smooth and politic relations with kings; the great administrator may found a wonderful colony; but it is the man with the wits and the hands, and some bigness of heart to tide him over daunting passages, that wins through the first elementary risks of any great discovery. Properly considered, Columbus's fame should rest simply on the answer to the single question, "Did he discover new lands as he said he would?" That was the greatest thing he could do, and the fact that he failed to do a great many other things afterwards, failed the more conspicuously because his attempts were so conspicuous, should have no effect on our estimate of his achievement. The fame of it could no more be destroyed by himself than it can be destroyed by us.

True understanding of a man and estimate of his character can only be arrived at by methods at once



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more comprehensive and more subtle than those commonly employed among men. Everything that he sees, does, and suffers has its influence on the moulding of his character; and he must be considered in relation to his physical environment, no less than to his race and ancestry. Christopher Columbus spent a great part of his active life on the sea; it was sea-life which inspired him with his great Idea, it was by the conquest of the sea that he realised it; it was on the sea that all his real triumphs over circumstance and his own weaker self were won. The influences at work upon a man whose life is spent on the sea are as different from those at work upon one who lives on the fields as the environment of a gannet is different from the environment of a skylark: and yet how often do we really attempt to make due allowance for this great factor and try to estimate the extent of its moulding influence?

To live within sound or sight of the sea is to be conscious of a voice or countenance that holds you in unyielding bonds. The voice, being continuous, creeps into the very pulses and becomes part of the pervading sound or silence of a man's environment; and the face, although it never regards him, holds him with its changes and occupies his mind with its everlasting riddle. Its profound inattention to man is part of its power over his imagination; for although it is so absorbed and busy, and has regard for sun and stars and a melancholy frowning concentration upon the foot of cliffs, it is never face to face with man: he can never come within the focus of

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its great glancing vision. It is somewhere beyond time and space that the mighty perspective of those focal rays comes to its point; and they are so wide and eternal in their sweep that we should find their end, could we but trace them, in a condition far different from that in which our finite views and ethics have place. In the man who lives much on the sea we always find, if he be articulate, something of the dreamer and the mystic; that very condition of mind, indeed, which we have traced in Columbus, which sometimes led him to such heights, and sometimes brought him to such variance with the human code.

A face that will not look upon you can never give up its secret to you; and the face of the sea is like the face of a picture or a statue round which you may circle, looking at it from this point and from that, but whose regard is fixed on something beyond and invisible to you; or it is like the face of a person well known to you in life, a face which you often see in various surroundings, from different angles, now unconscious, now in animated and smiling intercourse with some one else, but which never turns upon you the light of friendly knowledge and recognition; in a word, it is unconscious of you, like all elemental things. In the legend of the Creation it is written that when God saw the gathering together of the waters which he called the Seas, he saw that it was good; and he perhaps had the right to say so. But the man who uses the sea and whose life's pathway is laid on its unstable surface can hardly sum up his impressions of it



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so simply as to say that it is good. It is indeed to him neither good nor bad; it is utterly beyond and outside all he knows or invents of good and bad, and can never have any concern with his good or his bad. It remains the pathway and territory of powers and mysteries, thoughts and energies on a gigantic and elemental scale; and that is why the mind of man can never grapple with the unconsciousness of the sea or his eye meet its eye.

Yet it is the mariner's chief associate, whether as adversary or as ally; his attitude to things outside himself is beyond all doubt influenced by his attitude towards it; and a true comprehension of the man Columbus must include a recognition of this constant influence on him, and of whatever effect lifelong association with so profound and mysterious an element may have had on his conduct in the world of men. Better than many documents as an aid to our understanding of him would be intimate association with the sea, and prolonged contemplation of that face with which he was so familiar. We can never know the heart of it, but we can at least look upon the face, turned from us though it is, upon which he looked. Cloud shadows following a shimmer of sunlit ripples; lines and runes traced on the surface of a blank calm; salt laughter of purple furrows with the foam whipping off them; tides and eddies, whirls, overfalls, ripples, breakers, seas mountains high—they are but movements and changing expressions on an eternal countenance that once held his gaze and wonder, as

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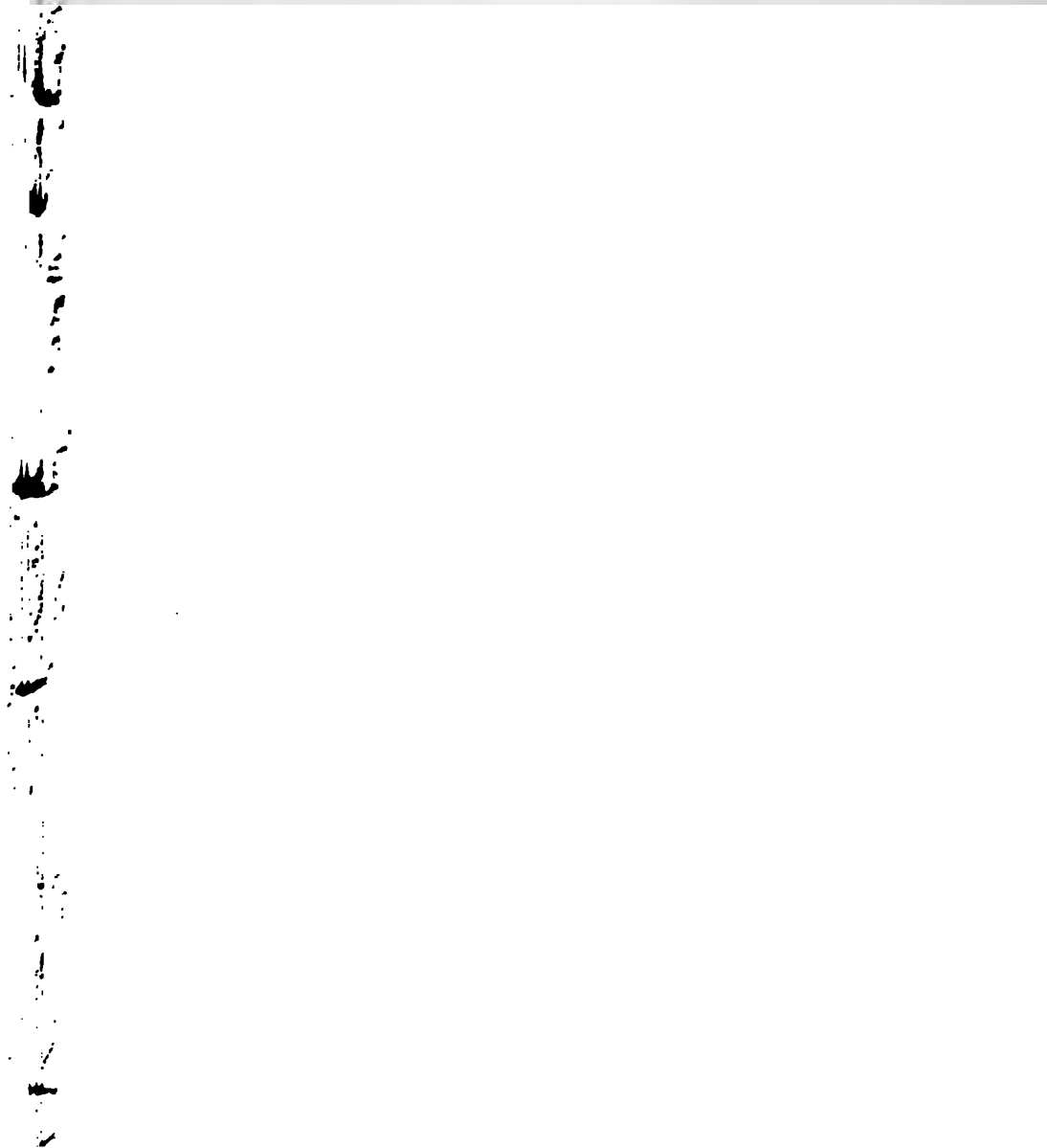
it will always hold the gaze and wonder of those who follow the sea.

So much of the man Christopher Columbus, who once was and no longer is; perished, to the last bone and fibre of him, off the face of the earth, and living now only by virtue of such truth as there was in him; who once manfully, according to the light that he had, bore Christ on his shoulders across stormy seas, and found him often, in that dim light, a heavy and troublesome burden; who dropped light and burden together on the shores of his discovery, and set going in that place of peace such a conflagration as mankind is not likely to see again for many a generation, if indeed ever again, in this much-tortured world, such ancient peace find place.





**NOTE**  
**ON THE NAVIGATION OF COLUMBUS'S**  
**FIRST VOYAGE**  
**BY THE**  
**EARL OF DUNRAVEN, K.P.**



N O T E  
ON THE NAVIGATION OF COLUMBUS'S  
FIRST VOYAGE

**A**S most unluckily the world is deprived of the privilege of perusing the original log or journal of Christopher Columbus, the account given by Las Casas of the first and most memorable voyage of that intrepid mariner is perhaps the most interesting human document in existence dealing with maritime affairs. It is to be regretted that, on account of the brilliancy of his achievement and the world-making character of the results following upon it, Columbus has been credited with almost superhuman intuitions and faculties of an extraordinary character. A sort of hero-worship has arisen which detracts from the real characteristics and nature of the man. If we read with an unprejudiced eye the plain words of the Journal, if we consider the navigational instruments at his disposal, if we realise his geographical and cosmographical ignorance, and can bring ourselves to understand how terrible in an age of ignorance and superstition must have been a voyage into the unknown, there is no necessity to draw upon the imagination in order to gild the crown which Columbus is naturally entitled to wear as a bold and skilful sailor, with a keen eye for the main chance, but also determined



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at all hazards to fulfil a mission which he deemed himself appointed by Providence to undertake.

To understand the nature of his task it is necessary to consider the amount and character of the information Columbus possessed, and the navigational appliances at his command. To realise the difficulties he contended with and overcame, the pages of the Journal must be perused with an open mind and much freedom in interpretation. The Journal is very inaccurate, or rather very slovenly, in details at any rate. We are not told whether civil or astronomical time is used. The courses steered and distances run are in many cases vaguely stated. Columbus is often said to have traversed such and such a distance during the day and such another distance during the night, but no definition of day and night is given us. Such loose expressions as "soon after sunrise," or "shortly after dark," or "three o'clock at night" are not infrequent. We do not know whether any allowance was made for the change of variation which Columbus experienced on the voyage, nor can we tell what leeway his ships made, and whether allowance was or was not made for it. Some obviously clerical errors are to be found. In endeavouring, therefore, to trace the incidents of the voyage and to lay down the courses steered and distances run, and thereby to form some idea of what passed through the minds of the great discoverer and his companions, conjecture must perforce be allowed to take a prominent part.

What was the extent of Columbus's knowledge? It is difficult to say. He may have voyaged as far north as Iceland. He had certainly sailed to England and as far south as Guinea; and must have been well acquainted

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with the meteorological and other phenomena of the eastern seaboard of the North Atlantic. Theoretically he knew the world was more or less round, and that if it were possible to sail far enough to the west well-known regions in the east would be reached; and he had good reason to believe that land had been found far to the westward. Northmen had visited and settled in Greenland and Vinland some centuries before Columbus undertook his voyage. It is true that the colony had disappeared, but it is difficult to believe that all memory or tradition of the fact that a settlement had been made across the Northern Atlantic could have died out. We may, I think, take it for granted that Columbus had heard, either in Iceland or England, rumours sufficient to convince him that land existed across the western ocean. Then there is the story of the "unknown pilot." It is stated that a ship trading to Madeira and the Canaries was blown across the ocean to some land, probably one of the Antilles, and was brought home after a terribly long voyage; and that the master shortly before his death communicated the facts of his discovery to Columbus. The voyage out is said to have taken twenty-eight or twenty-nine days, and the voyage home more than twice as long. The distance from the western islands to Guadeloupe, the nearest of the Antilles to which a ship was likely to be blown, is about 2616 miles. If she was blown away from the coast of Spain or Portugal the distance would be about 3216 miles. In either case the distance may easily have been traversed in twenty-eight or twenty-nine days. It is an historical fact that shortly after Columbus's first voyage a ship was blown across to the coast of Brazil and returned. It would be strange indeed if ships were not



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occasionally driven across the ocean by gales and a long continuance of easterly winds, and it is not strange that, under the circumstances then existing, very few should have returned. Though controversy has raged, and still rages, round this subject, the probability is in favour of the truth of the story, and it may be taken for granted that Columbus was aware that land had been discovered across the western ocean in high latitudes, and also on or about the latitude of the Canaries, or some other of the western islands.

Though Columbus was aware that the globe was spherical, he entertained most inaccurate ideas of its dimensions, and of the configuration of the continents and oceans composing it. He was all wrong in his estimate of the length of an equatorial degree. He believed that the coast of China and Japan lay only some 6500 miles west from the coast of Spain or Portugal, whereas the east coast of Japan is close upon 10,000 miles, and the east coast of China over 11,000 miles, distant from Lisbon. Columbus's conception of the size of the globe on the parallel of  $29^{\circ}$  was too small by some 4500 miles.

Columbus was a map-maker, and had doubtless studied the maps of the period which portrayed an immense projection eastward of China and Japan, and also certain hypothetical islands lying to the east of that coast. On the whole, we may assume that he knew that land had been discovered both on a high northern parallel and somewhere about the parallel of  $29^{\circ}$ , that he believed the mainland of China and Japan lay some 6500 miles to the west of Spain, and that certain islands—Antilia and others—would be met with on the way. That he expected to find land of some sort, probably the unknown pilot's land, about

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2000 or 2500 west of the Canaries, is rendered probable by the fact that he appointed a position some 2100 miles west of the Canaries as a rendezvous for the fleet in case the ships composing it became separated during the voyage.

Columbus had the compass. The compass-card in use at that time was divided into 360 degrees and 32 points as it is at present, but the points were named differently. The cardinal and quadrantal points were named as at present, but each quadrant was divided into four spaces, each of these being called a quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of the quadrant. Thus the point next to north to the eastward was called N.  $\frac{1}{4}$  N.E. instead of N. by E. as it is now; the point next to the northward of east was called E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  N.E. instead of E. by N.; and so on. The following table shows the old and modern method of naming the points of the compass:—

<i>Modern.</i>	<i>Old.</i>
North.	North.
N. by E.	N. $\frac{1}{4}$ N.E.
N.N.E.	N.N.E.
N.E. by N.	N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ N.
N.E.	N.E.
N.E. by E.	N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ E.
E.N.E.	E.N.E.
E. by N.	E. $\frac{1}{4}$ N.E.
East.	East.
E. by S.	E. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.E.
E.S.E.	E.S.E.
S.E. by E.	S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ E.
S.E.	S.E.
S.E. by S.	S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.
S.S.E.	S.S.E.
S. by E.	S. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.E.
South.	South.
S. by W.	S. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.W.
S.S.W.	S.S.W.

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<i>Modern.</i>	<i>Old.</i>
S.W. by S.	S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.
S.W.	S.W.
S.W. by W.	S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ W.
W.S.W.	W.S.W.
W. by S.	W. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.W.
West.	West.
W. by N.	W. $\frac{1}{4}$ N.W.
W.N.W.	W.N.W.
N.W. by W.	N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ W.
N.W.	N.W.
N.W. by N.	N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ N.
N.N.W.	N.N.W.
N. by W.	N. $\frac{1}{4}$ N.W.

So close an observer as Columbus must doubtless have been aware, even if the fact was not generally known and acted upon, that the compass needle did not point due north. Assuming as we may do that the lines of variation and secular changes in them are constant and regular, Columbus must in his voyages as far south as Guinea and as far north as Iceland have been acquainted with easterly variation ranging from about  $15^\circ$  to  $5^\circ$ . Roughly speaking, the curve of  $15^\circ$  passed through the western portion of England to the bight of the Gulf of Guinea. The line of  $10^\circ$  easterly variation passed some three or four degrees to the west of Cape Clear and Lisbon. The curve of  $5^\circ$  ran from Iceland just to the west of Madeira to the Canaries and Cape Blanco on the west coast of Africa. The line of no variation passed the Azores and Cape Verde Islands, and must have been struck by Columbus on his westerly voyage in about  $28^\circ$  west, or some 551 miles west of the Canaries. After that he passed into westerly variation, obtaining its maximum of  $11^\circ$  west in about longitude  $49^\circ$  west, or on the course pursued by Columbus about 1688 miles west of the



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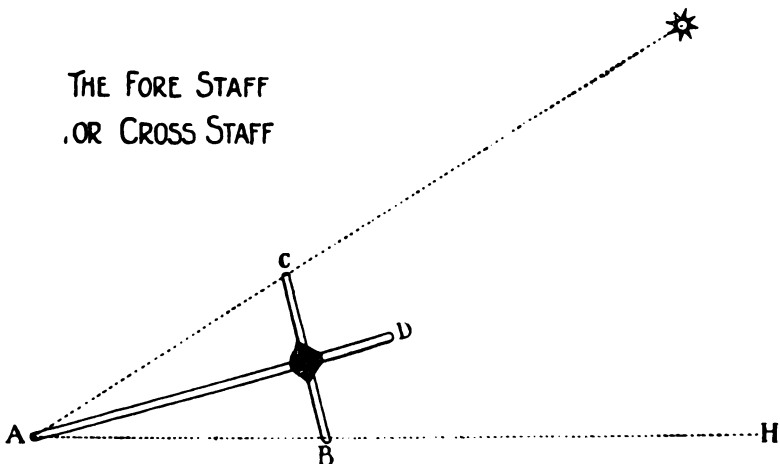
Canaries, and gradually diminishing to no variation in the longitude of the Bahama Islands. He had thus been accustomed to easterly variation ranging as high as  $15^{\circ}$  east, and probably sailed in westerly variation ranging as high as  $11^{\circ}$  west, making a difference altogether of  $26^{\circ}$ , or, roughly, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  points.

Columbus was ill provided with nautical instruments—that is to say, the nautical instruments of the day were very imperfect. He had no log or other means of measuring the speed of his ship, and could only have done so by noting the fuss his vessel made in going through the water, by watching the speed at which she passed small stationary objects, or by walking along the deck abreast of a stationary object in the sea and thus estimating the speed of the ship by the length of time it took him to pace a known distance. But though he could thus make a pretty good guess at the speed with which he was travelling through the water, he could not have ascertained the speed at which he was travelling over the ground, for he knew nothing about currents and had no means of investigating them. He might, it is true, have discovered the existence and velocity of a surface current in smooth water by anchoring, as it were, a small boat by means of a deep sea-line and lead, but the longest line in use in those days was forty fathoms; and no mention is made in the Journal of any attempt to determine the existence, strength, and direction of currents by that or any other means. In fact he had no means of doing so, and could not possibly have known anything about ocean currents. Yet it appears evident that he somehow persuaded his crew, and not only the crew but the pilots and other navigators, that he was possessed of knowledge on the subject. He certainly gave

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out a false reckoning, under-estimating his "Departure"—that is, his distance westward—in order that the crew should not be alarmed at the distance they were getting from home. As every man in his and in the other ships could estimate the speed of the vessels just as well as could Columbus, he was obliged to justify his false reckoning by asserting that the currents were against him. Goodness only knows how he managed to persuade the crew to believe this. Possibly he was the only man

THE FORE STAFF  
OR CROSS STAFF



capable of taking observations, and he may have instilled into them the belief that he could by observation correct his Dead-reckoning Departure. He most certainly could not; and as a matter of fact the currents, instead of being against him, as he asserted, were with him the whole way.

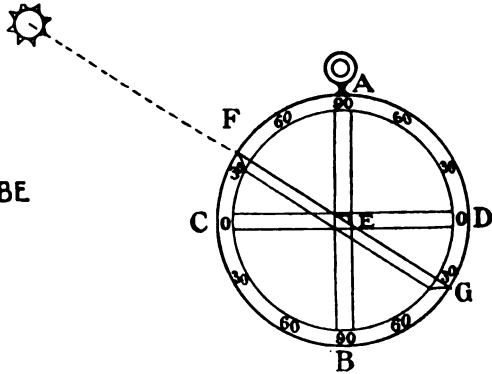
His only timekeeper was a half-hour sand-glass. For taking an observation he had the fore staff or cross staff, a quadrant, and a sea astrolabe. The fore staff or cross staff was a clumsy instrument, and can be best understood by a glance at the above diagram.

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The degrees and minutes corresponding to the altitude were marked on the longer arm of the staff. The observer, with his eye at A, moved the arm CB to and fro upon the long arm AD until B was on the horizon and C on the sun or other heavenly body observed.

The quadrant was a copper or brass triangle, one side being an arc graduated to  $90^\circ$ . The other two sides met at an apex where there was a ring, and whence a plumb-line hung across the arc. Two sights were fixed on one

THE SEA ASTROLABE



side, and the observer held the instrument loosely by the ring. As soon as the two sights were on with the sun, the arc was read off at the point where it was intersected by the plummet-line, which gave the altitude.

The astrolabe was the instrument principally used by Columbus, and above is a diagram of it.

The sea astrolabe consisted of a brass instrument about one foot in diameter, suspended from a fixed object, or by the hand of the observer, at A, and having a weight attached by a cord to A to act as a plumb-line. It was divided into degrees from  $90^\circ$  at A and B to  $0^\circ$  at C



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and D. FG is a movable arm centering in E, with sight vanes at G and F. The horizontal position of CD is obtained by means of the plumb-line attached at A. The observer looking through the sight-vane at G and F gets the arm GF on with the sun or other heavenly body, and reads off the altitude at either F or G.

Tables of the sun's declination had been calculated in Columbus's time, and he could probably calculate his latitude by meridian altitude of the sun taken with the astrolabe. But it is obvious that at sea, and especially in a small vessel, any observation must have been very unreliable when taken by an instrument in which the perpendicular and consequently the horizon line was ascertained by means of a plumb-line; indeed it is mentioned in the Journal of the homeward-bound voyage that, owing to the high sea, Columbus could not take an observation. On shore, doubtless, with the astrolabe suspended upon some fixed object, a fairly accurate altitude could have been taken.

Reference is made in the Journal on four occasions to observations for latitude. They all occur during the cruise among the islands, and may have been taken on shore or on the ship at anchor in a quiet harbour. But Columbus was certainly in the habit of taking observations at sea and at night, and therefore probably of the Pole Star, for on one occasion the crew were minded to throw him overboard some night, "publishing that he had fallen in taking the position of the star with his quadrant or astrolabe"; and it is mentioned that on another occasion the sea was too rough for him to observe the star. In all the recorded occasions on which latitude was found by observation the latitude is about doubled. Had the observations been of the sun, this curious fact might be very roughly accounted

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for by assuming the altitude to be recorded instead of the latitude; but as the Pole Star appears to have been observed the error is unaccountable, except on the assumption that the arc was cut to half-degrees and that half-degrees were misquoted for degrees.

One of the simplest methods of finding latitude is from the altitude of the Pole Star. The altitude of the Pole Star is, with a suitable allowance, the altitude of the Pole, and the altitude of the pole is of course the latitude. The only difficulty, from the modern mariner's point of view, is that with a reflecting instrument a clearly defined horizon is essential. Columbus did not use a reflecting instrument, and that objection did not therefore obtain. He could use the Pole Star at any time that it was visible, and undoubtedly the method of ascertaining latitude which he preferred was by observation of the altitude of that star. On shore, at any rate, Columbus could have observed the altitude of the Pole Star with a fair amount of accuracy, but to get anything like a decent latitude he must have known what allowance to make for the distance the star was above or below the pole. Polaris or the Pole Star (Alpha Ursa Minor), which is now little more than  $1\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  off the Pole, was, at the date of the first voyage, as much as  $3\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  off the Pole. A very large error might therefore easily have been made in latitude, and we may be sure that so careful and skilful a mariner as Columbus would not have placed the reliance that he did upon observations of the Pole Star unless he had some means of correcting that error. It is difficult to say what they were.

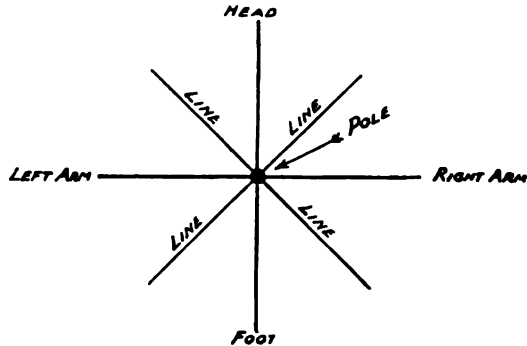
Great importance was attached to the Little Bear, and to two stars in it called the "Guards," by navigators of

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those days. R. H. Allen, in "Star Names and their Meanings" (1899), p. 459, says: " $\beta \gamma$  were the Guards or Wardens of the Pole that old Thomas Hood said were 'of the Spanish word *guardare* (to beholde), because they are diligently to be looked unto, in regard of the singular use which they have in navigation.'" Allen further says: "These stars, like the stars in Charles's Wain, were a timepiece to the common people, and even thought worthy of special treatises by navigators, as to their use in indicating the hours of the night."

In the "Safeguard of Saylers" (1619) there is a chapter on "Howe to knowe the houre of the night by the Guards by knowing on what point of the compass they shall be at midnight every fifteenth day throughout the whole year"; and in the "Arte of Navigation" "Englished out of the Spanyshe" by Richard Eden (1561) an account is given of an instrument for finding time by the circle described by "the two starres called the Guardians or the mouth of the horne." Tap's "Seaman's Grammar" (1609) also treats of the Guards.

Navigators used a diagram as below:—

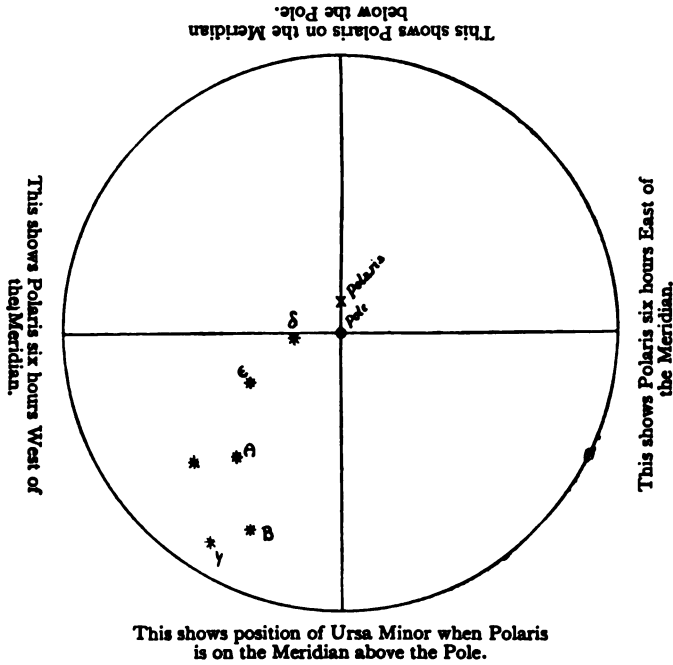


and undoubtedly calculated time at night by the motion of the Guards through the diagram, allowing three hours

## THE FIRST VOYAGE

between each line. The sun was their clock by day and the Guards by night. But it was an unreliable clock, useful to roughly estimate the passage of time, useless to ascertain time at ship for navigational purposes, and navigators would not have attached such great importance to the Little Bear if it had served merely as an indicator of the passage of time by night. I am convinced they used it also to estimate the relative positions of the Pole Star and Pole, and consequently the correction to be added to or subtracted from the altitude of the star for finding the altitude of the Pole and the latitude.

The following rough diagram may possibly indicate the method used:—



We may assume that the navigator possessed suffi-



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cient astronomical knowledge to judge by the position of the constellation whether Polaris was above or below the Pole. By drawing an imaginary line through the Guards  $\gamma$  and  $\beta$ , and dropping a perpendicular on to it from Polaris, he could know approximately when Polaris was on the meridian above or below the Pole, and consequently would know also approximately what allowance to subtract from or to add to the observed altitude of the Pole Star. Or, if circumstances permitted of it, he might take two observations of the star on the meridian, one above and one below the Pole, and by halving the sum of the two altitudes have arrived at the altitude of the Pole. He could also roughly determine when the star was due east or west—the best position for an observation in those days, as in that case no allowance would have to be made.

Columbus had, and very naturally had, considerable trouble with his crew. It is denied that anything like mutiny took place; but it is stated in the Journal that when steering west Columbus went below, and on coming on deck some time afterwards found the ship's head north-east. He is said to have been very angry with the helmsman, and to have abused him for careless steering. To attribute a change of course from west to north-east to careless steering, or to suppose the ship broke off from west to north-east, is of course absurd. He had been sailing to the southward of west, and if it be true that the crew put the ship's head north-east when Columbus was out of the way, it is obvious that they were steering for home, and if that is not mutiny, it is difficult to know how it can be described. But it is not credible that the course was altered to north-east; Columbus was in the north-east trades; no



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shift of wind is mentioned, and he had the ship's head brought back again to west. Moreover the Journal describes him as merely reprimanding the helmsman for careless steering; it is therefore safe to assume that north-east is a clerical error, and that the helmsman had let the ship come up to the northward or fall off to the southward of west.

It is stated that Columbus's crew were very much alarmed when they found that the compass-needle no longer pointed to the Pole Star, and Columbus evidently became uneasy himself. It cannot, however, be accurately said that he or they were alarmed because the needle did not point to the Pole Star; for, as I have shown, they must all have been aware that in their own home waters it did not point to that star. What they did observe, and what frightened them, was that it did not point in the direction to which they had been accustomed, and as the compass was the only reliable instrument they had wherewith to navigate, it is small wonder that they were much perturbed. According to the Journal Columbus manipulated the needle so as to make it point to the Pole Star in order to allay their fears. That is most improbable. It could only have been done in one of two ways. Either he must have deflected the needle easterly by means of a magnet, or he must have taken out the compass-card on the ground that it had become ineffective in some way, and must have altered the position of the needle under it, and in fact have substituted a faked card. It is difficult to conceive how he could have carried out either of these operations without the knowledge and connivance at any rate of the navigators and pilots (mates) in his own ship, and he certainly could not have done



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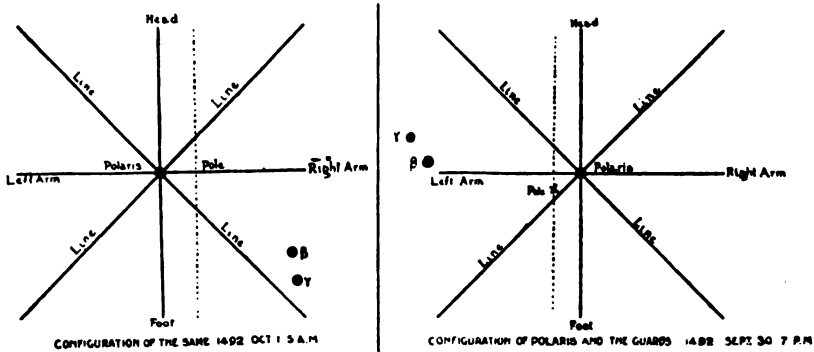
anything of the sort in respect of the compasses in the other two ships composing his fleet.

It is also stated in the Journal that the needle pointed to the west of the Pole Star at night, and was true to the Pole Star in the morning. I take leave to attribute this to an effort of the imagination on the part of the chronicler, or to an effort of imagination on the part of the crew. It must be remembered that Columbus had no instrumental means of taking an accurate azimuth, and with the compass-card swinging about, as it must do in a small ship, he may have persuaded his hands that they were mistaken in the bearings they had taken of the Pole Star. Still my impression is, not only that the crew were alarmed at the change in variation, but that Columbus was much disturbed in his own mind also. A very peculiar passage occurs in the Journal. Under date of the 30th September it says that "the stars which are called the Guards, when night comes on, are near the arm in the west, and at dawn they are on the line below the arm to the north-east, as it appears that during all the night they do not go more than three lines, which are nine hours, *and this each night*" (the italics are mine). It is to be presumed that by the "line below the arm to the north-east" the line pointing to the south-east is meant, in which case the revolution of the stars would be stated with tolerable accuracy. The diagram opposite shows the position of the stars.

The important part of the statement is that this revolution occurred each night. Of course it must have occurred each night, and the mention of that fact would seem to prove either that Columbus thought the stars were so near that he had altered their bearings by sailing some two thousand miles west, which is most improbable, or that

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he was in doubt whether some extraordinary perturbation had not occurred in the constellation containing the Pole Star. The hours of darkness on the 30th of September would normally be about ten, and during that time the Guards would rotate through  $150^\circ$ , whereas Columbus says they rotated only through  $135^\circ$ . But whether we are to understand by that that he thought the phenomena of rotation were not quite normal, or whether his observation



was not very accurate, or whether the night was unusually clear, it is impossible to say. Nor can we tell whether Columbus came to the conclusion that the declination of the needle was to be accounted for by some change in the position of the Pole Star; my opinion is that he realised that he had changed from easterly into westerly variation, and that such a change was normal; but, as that fact was far too intricate a matter to explain to his crew, he persuaded them it was the Pole Star that had changed its position, and that the compass-needle still pointed to the north.

The ideas entertained by Columbus concerning longitude



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must have been very hazy. As has already been mentioned, his conceptions of the length of an equatorial degree and of the dimensions of the globe were altogether inaccurate. Moreover, he had no means whatever of ascertaining by observation his differences of longitude, according to his own erroneous conception of the length of a degree on the parallel of 28 N., and he could not by observation fix his position on the spaces marked on the chart or map which he used. It is stated in Thacher's "Christopher Columbus," vol. i. p. 289, that a position west of the Canaries might be determined by observing the differences of the right ascension of stars. This is absurd, because the right ascension of a star does not vary by changing your position from east to west or *vice versa*, and the right ascension of stars vary only a few seconds in the year. Humboldt says that Columbus could, within certain limits, find the longitude of his vessel by availing himself of the declination of the magnetic needle. Longitude could not be found within very many degrees by such means; but in any case the lines of equal declination of the needle, or, as it is commonly called, of variation, were then unknown, and longitude could not be determined by means of an unknown factor.

It has been suggested he could find longitude by eclipses and various other means. That is also impossible. The dates of eclipses of the moon and some other phenomena were calculated, but no mention is made of an eclipse during this voyage, although on his second voyage he took a rough observation from an eclipse. He had no instruments by which he could observe the transits of Mercury or of Jupiter's satellites. He had no tables which would have enabled him to use a lunar distance,

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and if he had the tables, he had no instrument whereby he could have observed a lunar distance with sufficient accuracy to put them to any use. Even with our modern instruments the difficulty of getting contact between the sun or other stars with the moon is so great as to render lunars very unreliable. He had no timekeeper, and could not tell the time at Cadiz, or wherever his first meridian was. He might, it is true, by observation of a conjunction or of some other phenomenon the date of which at Cadiz or at some other known place was calculated, have ascertained the date at that place; but he had no means of finding ships' time by observation of the sun on or near the prime vertical, or by the polar angles of any of the heavenly bodies, or by any other means with sufficient accuracy to compare ship time with Cadiz time and so find his longitude. It is certain, therefore, that he had no reliable means of ascertaining his longitude, and never attempted to do so. He navigated, as hundreds and thousands of navigators have done since, until chronometers were invented, by sailing westward on a parallel, keeping on that parallel as well as he could by dead-reckoning, and by ascertaining his latitude by observation when he got the chance, and trusting entirely to dead-reckoning for his departure—that is, his distance westward.

It may be interesting to trace by the dead-reckoning, as recorded in the Journal, where Columbus was at certain critical dates on his outward journey. His point of departure was Gomera in the Canary Islands. Columbus's league contained four Italian miles, and was equal to 3.18 of our nautical miles. Considering the very unreliable character of all the data, whether by observation or by dead-



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reckoning, the fractions may, I think, be omitted, though they make a difference of some 200 miles in the total run from Gomera to Watling Island. We will assume three miles to the league. The true course and distance to Watling Island in the Bahamas, which was his landfall, is S.  $85\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  W., 3100 miles. It is to be premised that he expected to arrive at some land, or some important position, about 2000 miles west of the Canaries, for he instructed the other ships composing the fleet to rendezvous, in case of separation, 700 leagues, or 2100 miles west of their point of departure—Gomera.

He sailed on September the 6th. On the 13th—that is, seven days out—Columbus first observed that the compass-needle declined to the west. The other ships do not appear to have noticed this westerly variation until two or three days later. The run of the ship from the 6th to the 13th inclusive was west 672 miles. Gomera is in latitude  $28^{\circ} 6' 30''$  N. A course west and a departure of 672 miles would give, on the parallel of 28 N., a difference of longitude of  $12^{\circ} 16'$ . Gomera is in longitude  $17^{\circ} 20' 30''$  W., and Columbus was therefore in longitude  $29^{\circ} 37'$  W. on the 13th. He would have just passed the meridian of no variation, which lay in about 28 N. and 28 W. Columbus would need to have been a most extraordinarily close observer to have discovered westerly variation; and it would have been more correct to say that he noticed a change in the direction of the needle, and that easterly variation had ceased.

On the 19th the three ships compared notes with a view to fixing their position. The flagship made herself 1200 miles, the *Pinta* 1260 miles, and the *Niña* 1320 miles west of the Canaries. Not allowing for variation, the

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position by the dead-reckoning in the Journal was lat.  $28^{\circ} 6' N.$ , long.  $42^{\circ} 16' W.$ —no difference of latitude, and departure 1315 to the west. The *Niña's* computation is about right if the run of the 19th—that is, seventy-five miles—is included. Allowing  $5^{\circ} W.$  variation, and calculating from the point of departure (Gomera), the position gave a difference of latitude of 23 miles S., and a departure of 1319 miles west. It is worthy of notice that from the 6th to the 19th Columbus steered due west by compass; that on the 19th the three ships compared their respective reckoning, with the view undoubtedly of fixing the position of the fleet, and that from the 20th to the 26th inclusive the course was frequently changed. This may of course be accounted for by shifts of wind, and such winds as made it impossible for Columbus to lay his course; but it rather looks as if, having run about 1300 miles west by compass on the parallel of  $28^{\circ}$ , Columbus deemed himself near some island, and hunted about for it for a few days. On the 25th a consultation took place between Columbus and Alonso Pinzon, and the chart was consulted. The position according to the dead-reckoning, without allowance for variation, was lat.  $29^{\circ} 46' N.$ , long.  $46^{\circ} 54' W.$  Difference of latitude 100 miles north, departure 1565 miles west. Allowing  $5^{\circ}$  westerly variation, the position gave a difference of latitude of 50 miles N., and a departure of 1577 west. Columbus was about 535 miles to the east, and about 100 miles to the north of the position fixed upon as a rendezvous in case of the dispersal of the fleet. There can be no doubt that Columbus and the other captains and navigators believed themselves to be near land on the 25th, and in the evening of that day Pinzon thought he saw it in the



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south-west and raised a great shout. That Columbus believed land had been sighted in that direction is obvious, for he sailed south-west fifty-one miles in search of it. But on the 26th he resumed his course due west for forty-eight miles. He was evidently looking about for land which he believed to be in the immediate neighbourhood. On the 27th he seems to have abandoned the search, for during the next eleven days he proceeded on his proper course due west.

Columbus doubtless came to the conclusion that he had missed the unknown Pilot's island or Antilia, or some other island then supposed to exist, and made up his mind to lose no more time in searching for it. On October 1st Columbus's pilot, Juan de la Cosa, became alarmed. He reckoned his departure at 1734 miles from Ferro in the Canaries, and apparently thought if any land existed in the direction in which they were sailing, they ought to have reached it. As a matter of fact, he had considerably under-estimated his run. Since September the 25th Columbus had made a little southing and a good deal of westing. He had nearly got back to his parallel of 28 N. The position according to the dead-reckoning in the Journal, without allowing for variation, was lat.  $28^{\circ} 35' N.$ , long.  $54^{\circ} 53' W.$  Difference of latitude 29 miles north, departure 1983 west. Allowing for variation, the difference of latitude was 68 miles S., and departure 2038 miles west. He was approaching the position of the rendezvous. From October the 1st to the 5th the course and distance, without allowance for variation, was west 693 miles. Columbus was some 2600 miles west of the Canaries. Allowing for variation, his departure was 2638 miles west. He had long passed the position of the rendezvous, and



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had exceeded by 500 miles the distance which at the beginning of the voyage he had assured the crew was the utmost that would have to be traversed before they made the land. Martin Alonso Pinzon evidently became uneasy, for a consultation or altercation was held with Columbus on the 5th. Pinzon thought they were too far north, and wanted to sail to the south. Columbus wished to continue his course west, and as usual Columbus had his way. From the 5th to the 11th the courses varied, doubtless owing to shifts of wind. The course by compass and distance made good during those last anxious, eventful days was S.  $68\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  W., 644 miles. It is not likely that during that period the Admiral had any further difficulty with Pinzon or the pilots or crews. They saw great flocks of birds flying towards the southwest; they passed a carved stick showing human workmanship, and a green limb of a tree, and the branch of a briar rose. Abundant signs that they were near land must have been evident to all. It is difficult to realise the relief that all hands must have felt, impossible to imagine the anxiety in which men steeped in ignorance and superstition must have waited for a sight of the unknown land which they knew to be near. At ten o'clock at night Columbus saw a light. At two in the morning of the 12th the *Pinta* reported land in sight, and as soon as daylight permitted, the fleet crept in and brought up on the west side of Watling Island in eight fathoms. So ended a voyage in its consequences the most eventful ever undertaken. In itself it was uneventful. They were favoured by fair winds and fair weather. The voyage occupied thirty-five days. The course and distance according to the Journal was S.  $82^{\circ}$  W.,

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3216 miles. The total distance made was 3319 miles, or, if allowance is made for the difference between the English and Italian league, 3533 miles, which gives an average speed of 4.2 miles per hour. If the time from September the 6th to 3 A.M. on the 9th, during which it was calm and no distances are given in the Journal, is deducted, the average speed was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles per hour, and the voyage occupied  $32\frac{1}{2}$  days.

Columbus is credited with making a wonderful landfall. That of course is absurd. It is impossible to say that a landfall is good, bad, or indifferent unless some definite objective point exists. Columbus's voyage was undertaken purely as one of discovery. If he could be said to have any objective, it was the coast of China or Japan—a tolerably broad one. He may be credited, and ought to be credited, with keeping very closely to the plan he had mapped out, namely to sail west on the parallel of his point of departure—Gomera. He sagged away to the southward a little probably owing to leeway or westerly variation, or both; but on the whole he kept surprisingly close to his parallel. Whether Columbus made any allowance for change of variation it is impossible to say. No mention is made of his having done so, and it is probable therefore that he did not. On the other hand, he was a first-rate sailor man and navigator according to his lights. He may have arrived at the correct conclusion that he had passed from easterly into westerly variation, and may have made some allowance for the change.

Here is his dead-reckoning according to the Journal, worked out without allowing for variation:—

# THE FIRST VOYAGE

## OUTWARDS

*Courses and Distances of First Voyage, no Variation allowed.*

Courses.	Distance.	N.	S.	E.	W.
West . . . . .	2598	...	...	...	2598
W. by N. . . . .	79.5	15.5	...	...	78
W. by N. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. . . . .	63	18.3	...	...	60.3
W.N.W. . . . .	90	34.4	...	...	83.2
N.W. . . . .	66	46.7	...	...	46.7
W.S.W. . . . .	309	...	118.2	...	285.4
S.W. . . . .	114	...	80.6	...	80.6
		114.9	198.8		3232.2 Dep.
			114.9		
		Diff. lat. 83.9			

Lat. left . . . . .  $28^{\circ} 06' 30''$  N.      Long. left . . . . .  $17^{\circ} 20' 30''$  W.  
 Diff. lat. . . . . 1 23 54 S.      Diff. long. . . . . 60 41 00

Lat. in . . . . .  $26^{\circ} 42' 36''$       Long. in . . . . .  $78^{\circ} 01' 30''$   
 Lat. left . . . . . 28 06 30

$54^{\circ} 49' 06''$

Mid. lat. . . . .  $27^{\circ} 24' 33''$       Log sec. . . . . 10.051710  
 Dep. . . . . 3232.2      Log . . . . . 3.509471  
 Diff. long. . . . . 3641

60° 41'

Log . . . . . 3.561181

Position by D.R., Oct. 11th:—

Lat. . . . .  $26^{\circ} 42' 36''$  N.      Long. . . . .  $78^{\circ} 01' 30''$  W.

Position of Watling Island:—

Lat. . . . .  $24^{\circ} 5' 30''$  N.      Long. . . . .  $74^{\circ} 25' 10''$  W.  
     $26^{\circ} 42' 36''$  N.       $78^{\circ} 1' 30''$  W.

$2^{\circ} 37' 6''$

$3^{\circ} 36' 20''$

Diff. lat. . . . . 157      Diff. long. . . . . 216.3  
    Dep. . . . . 188.9

Watling Island would bear from this position S.  $51^{\circ}$  E.; distance, 251 miles.

## ON THE NAVIGATION OF

Here is the dead-reckoning, worked with  $5^\circ$  westerly variation, allowed for after Columbus got within the influence of westerly variation :—

### FIRST VOYAGE OUTWARDS

*Courses and Distances, allowing  $5^\circ$  W. Variation.*

Courses.	Distances.	N.	S.	W.
W. $\frac{1}{2}$ S. . . . .	2598	...	226.5	2588.0
W. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. . . . .	79.5	7.7	...	79.1
W. by N. . . . .	63	12.3	...	61.8
W. by N. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. . . . .	90	26.1	...	86.1
N.W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. . . . .	66	41.9	...	51.0
S.W. by W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. . . . .	309	...	145.6	272.5
S.W. $\frac{1}{2}$ S. . . . .	114	...	88.1	72.3
		88.0	460.2 88.0	3210.8 Dep.
		Diff. lat.	372.2	

Lat. left . . . $28^\circ 06' 30''$ N.	Long. left . . . $17^\circ 20' 30''$ W.
Diff. lat. . . . $6 12 12$ S.	Diff. long. . . . $59 03 00$ W.
Lat. in . . . $21^\circ 54' 18''$ N.	Long. in . . . $76^\circ 23' 30''$ W.
Mid. lat. . . . $25^\circ 00' 24''$	Log sec. . . . . $10.042748$
Dep. . . . . $3210$	Log . . . . . $3.506613$
Diff. long. . . . $3543$	Log . . . . . $3.549361$
Position by D.R., Oct. 11th :—	
Lat. . . . . $21^\circ 54' 18''$ N.	Long. . . . . $76^\circ 23' 30''$ W.
Position of Watling Island :—	
Lat. . . . . $24^\circ 5' 30''$ N.	Long. . . . . $74^\circ 25' 10''$ W.
	$76 23 30$
$2^\circ 11' 12''$	$1^\circ 58' 20''$
Diff. lat. . . . . $131.2$	Diff. long. . . . . $118.3$
	Dep. . . . . $108.9$

Watling Island would bear from this position N.  $40^\circ$  E. ; distance, 171 miles.

## THE FIRST VOYAGE

It is not easy to say either whether he made a good landfall on his homeward voyage, for his objective is not mentioned; but, on the supposition that he wanted to get home the nearest way and was bound for the Azores, and considering the terrible weather experienced at the end of the voyage, his landfall was fairly good.

On the 16th January Columbus started for home. His point of departure seems to have been the Bay of Samana in the Island of Haiti, in latitude  $19^{\circ} 12' 30''$  N., longitude  $69^{\circ} 19' 50''$  W.

Here is his dead-reckoning on the voyage home, worked without and with allowance for variation:—

### HOMEWARD VOYAGE

*Courses and Distances, without any allowance for Variation.*

Courses.	Distances.	N.	S.	E.
E.N.E. . . . .	854.5	327.0	...	789.7
East . . . . .	1135.5	...	...	1135.5
E. by S. . . . .	72.0	...	14.0	70.6
S.E. by E. . . . .	22.5	...	12.5	18.7
N.E. . . . .	290.5	205.5	...	205.5
N. by E. . . . .	123.0	120.6	...	24.0
N.E. by N. . . . .	124.5	103.5	...	69.1
S.E. . . . .	59.5	...	42.0	42.0
N.N.E. . . . .	226.5	209.2	...	86.7
E.S.E. . . . .	15.0	...	05.7	13.9
North . . . . .	34.5	34.5	...	...
S. by E. . . . .	49.5	...	48.5	09.7
E. by N. . . . .	97.5	19.0	...	95.6
S.S.E. . . . .	48.0	...	44.4	18.4
N.E. by E. . . . .	39.0	21.7	...	32.4
		1041.0	167.1	2611.8 Dep.
		167.1		
	Diff. lat. .	873.9		

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Lat. left . . . 19° 12' 30" N.	Long. left . . . 69° 19' 15" W.
Diff. lat. . . . 14 33 54 N.	Diff. Long. . . . 48 38 00 E.
<hr/>	
Lat. in . . . 33° 46' 24" N.	Long. in . . . 20° 41' 15" W.
Mid. lat. . . . 26° 28' 57"	Log sec. . . . . 10.048143
Dep. . . . . 2611.8	Log . . . . . 3.416939
Diff. long. . . . 2918	Log . . . . . 3.465082
<hr/>	
48° 38' 0"	

Lat. and Long. by D.R. :—  
 Lat. . . . . 33° 46' 24" N.                      Long. . . . . 20° 41' 15" W.  
 From this position Santa Maria (Azores) bore N. 48° W., distant 285 miles.

### HOMEWARD VOYAGE

*Courses and Distances, allowing 5° W. Variation.*

Courses.	Distances.	N.	S.	E.	W.
N.E. by E. ½ E. . . . .	854.5	402.8	...	753.7	
E. ½ N. . . . .	1135.5	98.9	...	1131.2	
E. ½ S. . . . .	72.0	...	07.1	71.7	
S.E. by E. ½ E. . . . .	22.5	...	10.6	19.9	
N.E. ½ N. . . . .	290.5	224.6	...	184.3	
N. ½ E. . . . .	123.0	122.4	...	12.1	
N.E. by N. ½ N. . . . .	124.5	109.8	...	58.6	
S.E. ½ E. . . . .	59.5	...	37.8	46.0	
N. by E. ½ E. . . . .	226.5	216.8	...	65.7	
E. by S. ½ S. . . . .	15.0	...	04.4	14.4	
N. ½ W. . . . .	34.5	34.3	...	...	03.3
S. by E. ½ E. . . . .	49.5	...	47.4	14.3	
E. by N. ½ N. . . . .	97.5	28.4	...	93.3	
S.E. by S. ½ S. . . . .	48.0	...	42.3	22.6	
N.E. ½ E. . . . .	39.0	24.7	...	30.1	
		1262.7	149.6	2517.9	03.3
		149.6		03.3	
	Diff. lat.	1113.1		2514.3 Dep.	
	Diff. lat.	18° 33' 06"			

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Lat. left . . . 19° 12' 30" N.	Long. left . . . 69° 19' 15" W.
Diff. lat. . . . 18 33 06 N.	Diff. long. . . . 47 41 00
Lat. n . . . 37° 45' 36"	Long. in . . . 21° 38' 15" W.
Mid. lat. . . . 28° 29' 03"	Log. sec. . . . . 10.056036
Dep. . . . . 2514.3	Log. . . . . 3.400468
Diff. long. . . . 2861	Log. . . . . 3.456504
47° 41'	

Lat. and Long. by D.R. :—

Lat. . . . . 37° 45' 36" N.      Long. . . . 21° 38' 15" W.

From this position Santa Maria (Azores) bore S. 73° W., distant 170 miles.

The other navigators thought the land sighted was the Rock of Lisbon.

The bearing and distance of Lisbon from the position by D.R. without allowance for variation :—

Lat. (Lisbon) . . . 38° 42' N.	Long. . . . . 9° 8' W.
Lat. by D.R. . . . 33 46 N.	Long. . . . . 20 41 W.
4° 56'	11° 33'
Diff. lat. . . . . 296	Diff. long. . . . . 693
	Dep. . . . . 563

Lisbon bore from the position by dead-reckoning, without allowing for variation, N. 62° E.; distant 636 miles.

The bearing and distance of Lisbon from position by D.R., allowing 5° W. variation :—

Lat. (Lisbon) . . . 38° 42' N.	Long. . . . . 9° 8' W.
Lat. by D.R. . . . 37 45 N.	Long. . . . . 21 38 W.
0° 57'	12° 30'
Diff. lat. . . . .	Diff. long. . . . . 750
	Dep. . . . . 591

From this position Lisbon bore N. 84° E., distant 594 miles.



## ON THE NAVIGATION OF

All the Masters and Pilots were considerably out in their reckonings; but Columbus proved himself to be the best navigator of the lot.

It will be noticed that both on the outward and homeward voyages Columbus overestimated his distance run considerably, a fact which it is exceedingly difficult to account for, especially in the first case, when the current was with him the whole way out. He was within the drift of the north-east trades and should have overrun his log. On the homeward voyage he experienced no effects of currents, being between the north-easterly drift and the Gulf Stream. It is constantly stated in the Journal that he found the currents were against him. That is not true; and it is obvious that he told his people that the currents were adverse, in order to justify the false reckoning he gave out to them. He probably took observations much more frequently than is recorded, and persuaded his crew that he could thereby correct his departure by dead-reckoning. As a matter of fact he could not do so, neither could he ascertain the direction and velocity of currents.

With the cruise among the islands, the search for the mainland, and the subsequent voyages of Columbus, it is not within my province to deal. No particular navigational interest attaches to the cruise among the islands, and the other voyages are noteworthy chiefly as evidence of the skill with which mariners of those days, ill provided as they were with instrumental appliances and possessing but little geographical, astronomical, or meteorological knowledge, navigated their queer little ships across the wide expanse of the western ocean. Acting on the experience gained during the first voyage, Columbus adopted a more



## THE FIRST VOYAGE

southerly course on his second venture, doubtless to avoid the Sargasso Sea. His powers of observation and of making correct deductions from what he observed were wonderful. Those are the qualities, combined with his confidence in himself and in his mission, that distinguish him as a master mariner among all his fellows. It would be most unfair upon him to attribute to chance the fact that he availed himself of the north-east trades on his way out and of the westerly winds prevailing farther north on his way home. During his voyages to the north, he must have noticed the prevalence of westerly winds in northern latitudes. He must have also known of the north-east trades, for they are frequently picked up in longitudes in which he was accustomed to sail. His course lay well within their influence during the months of September and October, and he may have gathered from the "unknown pilot" that they prevailed right across the ocean. He observed facts and acted upon them. What he could not have known, and must have been delighted to find, is that, in winter, the prevailing winds on the western side of the Atlantic are east or to the southward of east or south-westerly out of the Gulf of Florida, and would enable him to lay a northerly course until he got well within the belt of westerly winds. Be that as it may, he certainly adopted the best possible course outward bound by sailing south to the Canaries till he got into the region of the north-east trades, and then, under their influence, sailing west on a parallel. On his homeward voyage he was equally wise in making sufficient northing to get well within the influence of prevailing westerly winds. Moreover, his cosmographical and meteorological knowledge may have been sufficient to make him understand that the northerly



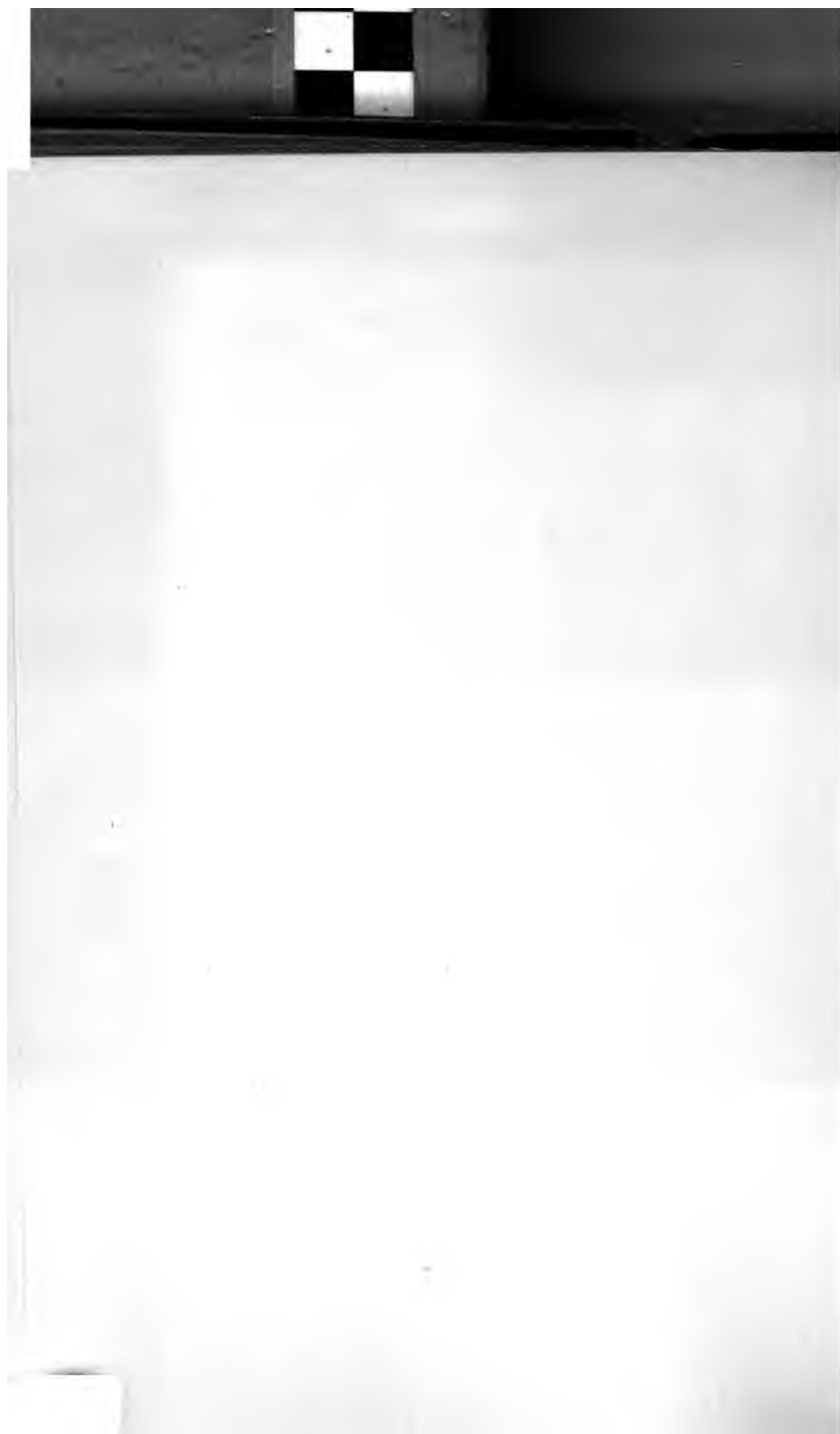
## THE FIRST VOYAGE

course was the direct route from Palos to the Bahamas, and that he could follow it on his way home ; but could not do so on his way out on account of the prevalence of westerly winds.

It is at any rate a fact that a sailing ship voyaging to-day from Palos to the Bahamas and back, with all our geographical, meteorological, astronomical, and navigational knowledge at her disposal, could not follow a better course out and home than that adopted by Columbus more than four hundred years ago.



## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### THE DATE OF COLUMBUS'S BIRTH

THERE is no subject in connection with Columbus which has excited so much controversy as the date of his birth. Las Casas and his son Ferdinand say nothing about it ; while the Admiral himself, although he never says at any given date "I am such and such an age," does make several allusions to his age at different periods of his past life ; which, when they are collected and examined together, contradict each other so completely that they result in nothing at all. It seems as though there were a conspiracy of silence on the part of his contemporaries ; and it is more than likely that for some purpose of his own he wished the date of his birth not to be known, partly perhaps because he did not wish his humble origin to be traced. Columbus on eight separate occasions thus makes mention of certain periods during which he was engaged upon one thing or another ; and these statements all contradict one another.

The dates assigned to his birth by various historians range between the years 1430 and 1456—a difference of twenty-six years Navarrete gives the date as 1430, but his evidence for it rests on a passage in the life of Ramusio's *Peter Martyr* which cannot be allowed the necessary historical weight in contradiction to the mass of evidence that lies against it. The two other most popular dates hitherto have been 1436 and 1446. The date 1436, which has been adopted by no less than eighteen authorities, including Prescott, Humboldt, Hoeffler, and Irving, is based on the statement of Bernaldez, with whom Columbus lived for some time, that the Admiral was about seventy years old when he died. The chief objections against it are that Columbus's mother would in that case have had to be fifty-five years of age when her youngest child was born ; and also that in the year 1470 it would make the Admiral

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thirty-four years of age ; whereas there is an authentic legal document of that year in which Columbus is described as having completed nineteen years.

The next most popular date among scholars has been somewhere between 1446 and 1447, the date adopted after much research by Henry Harrisse, the chief of the modern historians of Columbus. This date is arrived at by regarding certain of Columbus's own statements as true and others as untrue. In a letter written in 1501 Columbus says that he was quite young when he went to sea, that he had continued his seafaring life up to the date of writing his letter, and that he had navigated for forty years. In another place he says that he first went to sea at the age of fourteen. If, therefore, in the year 1501 he had been at sea for forty years, and if he was fourteen years old when he went to sea, he must have been fifty-four years old in the year of writing. This date is arrived at also in another way. In Columbus's Journal for the 25th of December 1492 he says that he has been at sea for twenty-three years without interruption. In another place he says that the negotiations in Spain occupied eight years ; in another that nine years had been spent in making discoveries. Twenty-three and eight and nine years added together make forty years, which, added to the fourteen years spent in Genoa before he went to sea, would again make him fifty-four years old in the year 1500. The first objection to this date is that the calculation is merely based on Columbus's own statements, which were notoriously inexact, and that other statements of his could be found to contradict this one. The next objection is that if he was born in 1446 his father and mother must have had their five children through a period of twenty-four years, as Columbus's younger brother was born in 1468, and his sister Bianchinetta was born later still.

The other dates are all based on some combination of the various puzzling statements made by Columbus as to the way in which his life was divided, and none of them now merits serious mention (although many of them have been the subject of extensive monographs) except the date 1451, which was first put forward by Mr. Richard Davy in an article in the *National Review* for October 1892, and was ably established by Señor de la Rosa in his

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paper read before the International Congress of Americanists held in Paris in September 1900; and was in 1903 the subject of a very able monograph by Mr. Henry Vignaud, in which a critical study was made of the various dates assigned to the birth of Columbus, and 1451 announced as the true date. The evidence for this date rests on notarial documents recently discovered in Genoa. In one document, dated 31st October 1470, it is expressly stated that Christopher Columbus had reached the full age of nineteen years—*major annis decemnovem*. This was interpreted by Mr. HARRISSE as meaning that Columbus was more than nineteen years of age and less than twenty-five, as the statutes of Genoa at this time recognised several ages as constituting a majority for different purposes. Unfortunately for this argument, however, although the ages of sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, and twenty-five were all recognised as constituting majorities for different purposes, the age of nineteen was not. There can, according to Mr. Vignaud's argument, be no reason for mentioning the age of nineteen in this document except that it was the actual age of Columbus. The legal majority necessary for the act he was then performing was (as he was accompanied by his father) sixteen; all that the notary had to record was that he was a major, and he added for purposes of description and identification that he was a major of nineteen years.

Taking this document, therefore, as evidence in its simplest and most natural reading, and assuming that Columbus was nineteen years of age in October 1470, it follows that he was born in 1451. It then becomes interesting to see how far this can be reconciled with Columbus's own statements and the known facts of his life. Knowing what we do of the birth-dates of other members of his family, this date would make a difference of twenty years between the birth of Domenico's eldest and youngest children—a sufficiently wide interval; any attempt to fix the date of his birth earlier than this increases the interval to an impossible extent, as it is very unusual for a woman to bear children through a period of much longer than twenty years. In a letter of the 7th of July 1503, Columbus says that he first offered his services when he was twenty-eight years old. We know that he arrived in Portugal in 1476, and that it was about 1579 that he began in earnest to think and

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speak about discovery—which would make him twenty-eight years old at that time. The authenticity of the date 1451 may be regarded as finally established by the recent discovery of another Genoese document dated 25th August 1479, and first published in the *Giornale storico e letterario della Liguria* for January 1904, in which Columbus is referred to as being at that time about twenty-seven years old. The other very elaborate arguments by which this date is arrived at are to be found in the “Real Birth-Date of Columbus : A Critical Study of the various Dates assigned to the Birth of Christopher Columbus ; The Real Date 1451 : With a Bibliography of the Question. By Henry Vignaud. London : Henry Stevens, Son & Stiles, 1903.”

Other important works bearing on the subject are :—

HARRISSE, HENRY, *Christophe Colomb*. Paris, 1884. Vol. i. pp. 223-241.

SANGUINETTI, L'ABBÈ, *Anno della nascita di Cristoforo Colombo*. Genoa, 1891.

DE LA ROSA, G., *La solution de tous les problèmes relatifs à Christophe Colombe, &c.* Paris, 1902.

RUGE, DR. SOPHUS, *Columbus*. Berlin, 1902.



## APPENDIX B

### THE TOSCANELLI LETTER

**I**N or about the year 1547 Bartolomé de Las Casas, writing a biography of Columbus from the papers of the Admiral placed in his hands by Ferdinand Columbus, writes :—

“The said Master Paul, having received the letter from Columbus, replied in a letter written in Latin, incorporating therein the letter he had written to Hernando Martinez, canon, which letter I saw and had in my hands, it being translated from Latin into Romance (Spanish).”

Briefly put, the story of the Toscanelli letter is this :—

This Latin text of a letter from Paolo Toscanelli, long sought for, was supposed to have been discovered, in 1858 or 1871—no matter which, here—written in the Admiral's own handwriting on one of the blank pages of the 1477 edition of the *Historia Rerum Ubique Gestarum* of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pius II.). Columbus is supposed to have entrusted his own letter to a Lorenzo Birardi or Girardi, a Florentine engaged in mercantile pursuits in Lisbon. If indeed he was the messenger between Columbus and Toscanelli, he seems to have confined himself strictly to the discharge of his single task ; for in the reply, Toscanelli seems to believe Columbus to be a Portuguese.

No trace of the Columbus letter to Paolo Toscanelli was found among Toscanelli's papers ; nor indeed any trace of his answer to Columbus, although, at the request of Duke Hercules d'Este, a search was made within twelve years of Toscanelli's death.

Nor have we any mention of the means by which the reply was sent to Columbus, although the name of the man who carried the letters from Columbus is preserved. A diligent search has failed to reveal the authentic presence in Lisbon of any such person as Hernando Martinez, familiar of the King of Portugal. This may

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prove an interesting point, as, if the Toscanelli letter is a forgery, the added weight and evidence of the letter to Martinez must have been incorporated in it at some time and place where there could be no question of producing Martinez to testify to its authenticity.

The Latin text of the letter, which should be a copy of the only real authentic text, is faulty and unscholarly. Two possible explanations of this have been put forward :—

- (a) That Columbus may have entered the letter in his book from memory, guided in his use of Latin by the scanty light of his own classical acquirements.
- (b) That Toscanelli may have used an amanuensis or scribe, who played havoc with his prose.

But there is no reason to suppose that he used the scribe on this only occasion, or that the scribe should have been allowed to send forth a document defaced, especially such a document as this; no merely friendly letter, but a letter of approval and encouragement from one of the greatest men of his own time to one who had put forth such a plan as must have seemed magnificent and startling even to a great geographer.

Beyond the usual eulogistic words of address, the whole tone of the letter is one of preoccupied acceptance of Columbus's scheme. We have ample proof of the fact that it was considered in learned circles a very wild scheme, if a magnificent one: but the writer of the Toscanelli letter could not have been less surprised, had he lived with this prospect by him all his life. The ordinary supposed obstacles are not mentioned, the dangers and uncertainties are not discussed: in spite of the accepted geographical conceptions of his time, the writer goes back to a writer of the first century and puts forward his assertions as true, although these very assertions were not true, and had been discussed and disposed of by Ptolemy.

Of this more will be said presently.

Apart from the fact that no likely Martinez, canon and courtier, can be found, there are many arguments to be put forward against any letter having been asked for from Toscanelli by anybody connected with the Portuguese Court, at the time mentioned as the date of the letter, namely, 1474.

1. Between 1474 and 1479 Portugal was engaged in war with

## THE TOSCANELLI LETTER

Spain ; and Alphonso V. had no leisure to form or foster schemes for voyages of discovery.

2. The Treaty in 1479 ended the war. In this Treaty of Alcaçores the fields for new discoveries reserved by Spain and Portugal are clearly defined. There is no sign of any intention on the part of Alphonso to claim for himself lands or land discovered to the westward. Had he had any such schemes he would not have failed to include some reservation thereon in his Treaty, especially if we consider that legends had always been current on the existence of mythical countries in the midst of the Atlantic.

3. Apart from the reproach already made on the ground of its unscholarly Latin, the Toscanelli letter is also fantastic and inexact. The information given on the lands about to be discovered, which are identified in the writer's mind with the extreme East (China), is given in evident ignorance of the later internal changes of China ; based, in fact, on an old and fantastic tale recounted by a Pisan traveller, Rusticiano, to Marco Polo, a Venetian, and by him published, under the title of *Il Milione*, at the end of the thirteenth century. Had Toscanelli wished he could have gathered information by hearsay from travellers lately returned from China, or read several descriptions of the lands they had visited. Two at least had experience wide enough to command respect. These are Bartolommeo Fiorentino, returned in 1424 after twenty-four years ; and Niccolò di Conti, returned in 1439 after forty years in the East.

The scientific support afforded by the Toscanelli letter to the schemes of Columbus is strangely unsound. It is drawn from the *Imago Mundi* of Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly, and from Marinus of Tyre, whose works have perished in the originals, but whose theories are known to us by the fact that Ptolemy discussed them at length and refuted them. Toscanelli could have had easy access to the extant Greek texts of Ptolemy, or even seen, *in MS.*, the translation of Jacopo Angelo, which was done in 1409 or 1410, although not published till 1475, at Vicenza. Had he borrowed for once from Marinus of Tyre he would not, however, have failed to comment in some way on the fact that Ptolemy shows the calculations of Marinus of Tyre to be erroneous.



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And here a consideration by the way is not entirely out of place, if we are to try and establish the probable date of authorship of these famous letters. The translation of Ptolemy was first printed in 1475. The MS. existed but was not accessible to Columbus. The *Imago Mundi* was printed between 1480 and 1490. Columbus only came across these two books late in his career, as it is reasonable to suppose that only late in his career did he become possessed of the greater part of any scholarship he could boast of. From these three sources, Ptolemy, the *Imago Mundi*, and the *Milione* of Marco Polo, all the information contained in the Toscanelli letters is drawn. Columbus is known to have possessed a copy of the *Imago Mundi*, a copy of the Ptolemy, and a copy of the Marco Polo. He annotated these books freely, and literally covered their margins with notes, the reading of which reveals that it was there he had found his geographical system. Among these notes there seems to have been no note made of the fact that Toscanelli had already imparted this knowledge to him.

The perusal of these books and presumably the annotations belong to the period in which Columbus was called to endure those heart-breaking cross-examinations from learned assemblies, when he must have felt bitterly his lack of that book-learning which would have constituted in itself a claim to brotherhood with his learned judges, and the lack of which proved over and over again to be his chief and most insuperable misfortune—discrediting all his arguments at first sight, and branding him an adventurer in effect and in intention.

If the Sovereigns of Spain had placed any reasonable degree of confidence in the scheme of Columbus, if they had thought that at best his expedition could prove to be more than a raid on a far-off land, or dreamed that his first incursion could open the way to a conquest by Spain of the lands he hoped to reach, they would have found means to convince him that the terms he demanded were preposterous. If the promises of the Toscanelli letter alone had been taken seriously, Columbus would have possessed at once wealth far in excess of the wealth of any single Sovereign in the Old World. This very unreasonable disproportion between his claims and his position as a *subject* of the Crown, however exalted, was the

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very source of all the litigations and bitterness that followed. The jealousy against him, of which so much has been heard, was no doubt not against his *rank*, but against the power which was fast flowing into his hands, and which would have ended in giving his descendants power to wrest from the Crown of Spain these very colonies on which Columbus had planted the flag of Spain, and had taken *in her name*. From some such feeling as this the antagonism to him must have sprung—a mistrust of his alien blood, which constituted him an hereditary enemy to the country to which he owed his greatness; a fear of the actual power which was his to wield. Otherwise his titles and his glory would not have roused very strong feelings among the *grandees* of Spain, who thought themselves under any circumstances infinitely better men than he, and no doubt admitted no rivalry beyond that established by the laws of etiquette. Their feelings need not be supposed to have differed greatly from the feelings of the English House of Lords in our own day towards a man of humble origin who is raised to the peerage for other than political reasons.

Concerning the possible authorship of the Toscanelli letter, one more consideration occurs to me here. The documents from which Las Casas drew his information were deposited by Columbus at the convent of Las Cuevas near Seville, and were jealously guarded by these religious till the year 1609, when they passed into the hands of Nuno de Portugal, heir to the estates of Columbus. These monks were also the guardians of the papers of Bartholomew Columbus, *who withdrew his papers in 1509*. I mention this here in deference to the fact that Mr. Vignaud suggests Bartholomew as the possible forger of the famous letter.

To sum up finally; the real points are these:—

- (a) No trace of Toscanelli having received any letter from Martinez to be found among his papers.
- (b) No trace of any reply sent from him to Martinez.
- (c) No trace of Toscanelli having received any letter from Columbus.
- (d) No trace of any reply of his to Columbus.



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- (e) The original letter from Toscanelli to Martinez cannot be found in any archives.
- (f) The personality of Martinez is a mysterious one, and there is no record of his existence, although he was supposed to have been a canon at Lisbon, and to have held an office at Court.
- (g) No trace exists of the original of the letter from Toscanelli to Columbus.
- (h) Columbus never mentioned these letters.
- (i) The letters contains matter unscientific and out of date. This matter is contained entirely in three books constantly read and annotated by Columbus.
- (j) The scientific statements contained in the letter are at variance with the ideas generally accepted by men of science in Toscanelli's days and held by Toscanelli himself.
- (k) The description of the countries of the West is out of date ; and is in accordance with a tale written in the thirteenth century by Marco Polo. Columbus had no ready means of correcting the tale of Marco Polo, but Toscanelli on the other hand must have been acquainted with the descriptions of recent travellers returned from China.

As for Las Casas, the paragraph which I have quoted contains so many direct assertions that it can only be taken as evidence of a sincere misconception. It is not deliberate lying, on the face of it. Poor Las Casas was taken in, no doubt, by the guard-leaf copy, just as the new inventor of it was, in 1858, or 1871—no matter here which. He said he had seen it, and had it in his own hands. So he thought most certainly. The spirit of truth breathes in his words, although they are not literally correct. He had seen a letter from Paulus, Physicus, to Columbus, in Latin—all that is true. He could not produce it or reproduce it, for what he had seen was in the Admiral's own handwriting. He thought no doubt that he would come across the original, in time.

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As to the authorship, it would be much more reasonable to suppose that Lorenzo Girardi played a practical joke on Columbus, and wrote the reply to a letter which he did or did not deliver, than to ascribe it to Toscanelli. But then Columbus would hardly have failed to be struck by the fact that Toscanelli read the self-same three books that he did, and that the limits of his knowledge coincided so strangely with his own! The most reasonable explanation of the forgery is the one suggested on p. 105, vol. i., although it is entirely unsupported by any historical evidence.



## APPENDIX C

### CAPITULATION OF APRIL 17, 1492

#### *Translation*

**T**HE things supplicated which your Highnesses give and declare to Christopher Columbus in some satisfaction for what he is to discover in the oceans, and for the voyage which now, with the aid of God, he is about to make therein in the service of your Highnesses, are as follows :—

First, that your Highnesses as Lords that are of the said oceans make from this time the said Don Christopher Columbus your Admiral in all those islands and mainlands which by his hand and industry shall be discovered or acquired in the said oceans during his life, and after his death his heirs and successors, from one to another perpetually, with all the pre-eminences and prerogatives belonging to the said office and according as Don Alonso Enriques, your High Admiral of Castile, and the other predecessors in the said office held it in their districts.—It so pleases their Highnesses. John de Coloma.

Likewise, that your Highnesses make the said Don Christopher your Viceroy and Governor General in all the said islands and mainlands and islands which, as has been said, he may discover or acquire in the said seas; and that for the government of each one and of any one of them, he may make selection of three persons for each office, and that your Highnesses may choose and select the one who shall be most serviceable to you, and thus the lands which our Lord shall permit him to discover and acquire will be better governed in the service of your Highnesses.—It so pleases their Highnesses. John de Coloma.

Item, that all and whatever merchandise, whether it be pearls, precious stones, gold, silver, spices, and other things whatsoever,



## CAPITULATION

and merchandise of whatever kind, name, and manner it may be, which may be bought, bartered, discovered, acquired, or obtained within the limits of the said Admiralty, your Highnesses grant henceforth to the said Don Christopher, and will that he may have and take for himself the tenth part of all of them, deducting all the expenses which may be incurred therein; so that of what shall remain free and clear he may have and take the tenth part for himself and do with it as he wills, the other nine parts remaining for your Highnesses.—It so pleases their Highnesses. John de Coloma.

Likewise, that if on account of the merchandise that he might bring from the said islands and lands which as aforesaid he shall acquire and discover, or of that which may be taken in exchange for the same from other merchants here, any suit should arise in the place where the said trade and traffic shall be held and conducted; and if by the pre-eminence of his office of Admiral it may belong to him to know of such suit, it may please your Highnesses that he or his deputy, and no other judge, may take cognisance of the said suit, and thus it is decreed henceforth.—It so pleases their Highnesses if it belongs to the said office of Admiral, as the said Admiral Don Alonso Enriques held it and the others, his predecessors in their districts, and if it be just. John de Coloma.

Item, that in all the vessels which may be equipped for the said traffic and negotiation each time and whenever and as often as they may be equipped, the said Admiral Don Christopher Columbus may, if he wishes, contribute and pay the eighth part of all that may be expended in the equipment. And also that he may have and take of the profit, the eighth part of all which may result from such equipment.—It so pleases their Highnesses. John de Coloma.

These are executed and despatched with the responses of your Highnesses at the end of each article in the town of Santa Fé de la Vega de Granada, on the seventeenth day of April in the year of the nativity of our Saviour Jesus Christ one thousand four hundred and ninety-two. I, the King. I, the Queen. By the order of the King and of the Queen. John de Coloma. Registered, Calçena.



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### CAPITULATION OF APRIL 30, 1492.

IN THE NAME of the Holy Trinity and Eternal Unity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons really distinct and one divine essence which lives and reigns for ever without end, and of the blessed and glorious Virgin, Saint Mary, our Lady, his Mother, whom we regard as sovereign and advocate in all our actions, and to her honour and worship, and of the blessed Apostle Saint James, light and mirror of the Spains, patron and guide of the Kings of Castile and Leon, and likewise to the honour and worship of all the other saints of the celestial court. Now though according to nature man cannot know perfectly what God is, however great His knowledge of the world may be, yet he can know Him by seeing and contemplating His wonders and the works and acts which He has done and does every day, since all works are done by His power, governed by His wisdom, and maintained by His goodness ; and thus man can understand that God is the beginning, middle, and end of all things, and that in Him they are comprehended ; and He maintains each one in that state which He has ordained for them, and all have need of Him and He has no need of them, and He is able to change them whenever he may choose, according to His will ; and it is not in His nature to change or alter in any manner ; and He is called King over all Kings, because from Him they derive their name and by Him they reign, and He governs and maintains them, and they are His vicegerents, each one in His kingdom, placed by Him over the nations to maintain them in justice and in truth, temporally ; which is shown completely in two ways, one being spiritual, as the prophets and saints have shown, to whom our Lord gave grace to have accurate knowledge of things and to cause them to be understood ; the other is according to nature, as philosophers have shown, who were discerners of things naturally. For the Saints said that the King is set upon earth in the place of God to fulfil justice and to give to each one his due, and therefore they called him the heart and soul of the people ; and just as the soul is in the heart of man, and by it the body lives and is maintained, so in the King resides justice, which is the life and

## CAPITULATION

support of the people of his dominions ; and just as there is but one heart and by it all the members are united to form one body, even so all the members of the kingdom, however many they may be, are one, because the King must be, and is, one, and therefore they must all be one with him to follow him and to help in the things which he has to do ; and according to nature the philosophers said that kings are the head of the kingdom, for as from the head proceed the perceptions by which all the members of the body are directed, even so by the mandate which proceeds from the King, who is Lord and head of all the members of the kingdom, they must be governed and directed and must pay obedience thereto ; and so great is the authority of the power of kings, that all laws and rights are subject to their power, for they do not derive it from men, but from God, whose place they occupy in matters temporal ; to whom among other things it chiefly appertains to love, honour, and protect his people, and among others he must especially select and honour those who deserve it on account of the services they have rendered to him ; and therefore, the king or prince, among his other powers, not only can but ought to bestow favours upon those who are deserving thereof for the services they have rendered to him and for the goodness he may find in them. And because among the other virtues appertaining to kings, according to the saying of the philosophers, justice is one, and is the virtue and truth of things, and by it the world is best and most righteously maintained, and it is, as it were, a fountain from which all rights flow, and it always exists in the dispositions of just men, never failing, and giving and distributing to each his due ; and it comprehends in itself all the principal virtues, and very great utility arises therefrom, for it causes every one to live prudently and peaceably according to his condition, without fault and without error ; and thereby the good become better, receiving rewards for the good deeds they have done, and the others are reformed and amended. And this justice consists of two principal parts, the one commutative, which is between one man and another ; the other distributive, in which are obtained the rewards and remunerations of the good and virtuous labours and services which good men do for kings and princes and for the public welfare of their



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kingdoms. And since, as the laws declare, to give rewards to those who serve well and faithfully is a thing which is very becoming to all men, but especially to kings, princes, and great lords, who have the power to do it, and it is their peculiar privilege to honour and exalt those who serve them well and faithfully, and whose virtues and services deserve it; and in rewarding good deeds the kings who do so show that they are discerners of virtue and likewise administrators of justice, for justice does not consist only in the exemplary punishment of evil-doers, but also in rewarding the good. And moreover another great utility arises therefrom, for it incites the good to become more virtuous and the wicked to amend themselves, and when this course is not pursued the contrary might happen. And since among the other rewards and remunerations which kings can bestow upon those who serve them well and faithfully they can honour and elevate them among the others of their family, and ennoble, decorate, and honour them, and confer many other benefits, graces, and favours upon them: Therefore, considering and taking into account all that is aforesaid, we desire that by this our patent of privilege, or by the transcript thereof signed by a public scrivener, all who now are and shall be from henceforth may know that we Don Ferdinand and Donna Isabella, by the grace of God King and Queen of Castile, Leon, Aragon, Sicily, Granada, Toledo, Valencia, Galicia, Majorca, Seville, Sardinia, Corsica, Murcia, Jaen, Algarbe, Algeciras, Gibraltar, and the Canary Islands; Count and Countess of Barcelona; Lords of Biscay and Molina; Dukes of Athens and Neopatria; Counts of Roussillon and Cerdagne, Marquises of Oristano and Goziano, have seen a patent of grace, signed with our names and sealed with our seal, made in this manner: Don Ferdinand and Donna Isabella, by the grace of God King and Queen of Castile, Leon, Aragon, Sicily, Granada, Toledo, Valencia, Galicia, Majorca, Seville, Sardinia, Cordova, Corsica, Murcia, Jaen, Algarbe, Algeciras, Gibraltar, and the Canary Islands; Count and Countess of Barcelona; Lords of Biscay and Molina; Dukes of Athens and Neopatria; Counts of Roussillon and Cerdagne, Marquises of Oristano and Goziano; Forasmuch as you, Christopher Columbus, are going by our command, with some of our ships and with our subjects, to

## CAPITULATION

discover and acquire certain islands and mainland in the ocean, and it is hoped that, by the help of God, some of the said islands and mainland in the said ocean will be discovered and acquired by your pains and industry; and therefore it is a just and reasonable thing that since you incur the said danger for our service you should be rewarded for it, and as we desire to honour and favour you on account of what is aforesaid, it is our will and pleasure that you, the said Christopher Columbus, after you have discovered and acquired the said islands and mainland in the said ocean, or any of them whatsoever, shall be our Admiral of the said islands and mainland which you may thus discover and acquire, and shall be our Admiral and Viceroy and Governor therein, and shall be empowered from that time forward to call and entitle yourself Don Christopher Columbus, and that your sons and successors in the said office and charge may likewise entitle and call themselves Don, and Admiral and Viceroy and Governor thereof; and that you may have power to use and exercise the said office of Admiral, together with the said office of Viceroy and Governor of the said islands and mainland which you may thus discover and acquire, by yourself or by your lieutenants, and to hear and determine all the suits and causes civil and criminal appertaining to the said office of Admiralty, Viceroy, and Governor according as you shall find by law, and as the Admirals of our kingdoms are accustomed to use and exercise it; and may have power to punish and chastise delinquents, and exercise the said offices of Admiralty, Viceroy, and Governor, you and your said lieutenants, in all that concerns and appertains to the said offices and to each of them; and that you shall have and levy the fees and salaries annexed, belonging and appertaining to the said offices and to each of them, according as our High Admiral in the Admiralty of our kingdoms levies and is accustomed to levy them. And by this our patent, or by the transcript thereof signed by a public scrivener, we command Prince Don Juan, our very dear and well-beloved son, and the Infantes, dukes, prelates, marquises, counts, masters of orders, priors, commanders, and members of our Council, and auditors of our chamber, alcaldes, and other justices whomsoever of our household, court, and chancery, and sub-commanders,

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governors of castles and fortified and unfortified houses, and all councillors, assistants, governors, alcaldes, bailiffs, judges, veinticuatro, jurats, knights, esquires, officers, and liege men of all the cities, towns, and places of our kingdoms and dominions, and of those which you may conquer and acquire, and the captains masters, mates, officers, mariners, and seaman, our natural subject who now are or hereafter shall be, and each and any of them, that upon the said islands and mainland in the said ocean being discovered and acquired by you, and the oath and formality requisite in such case having been made and done by you or by him who may have your procuration, they shall have and hold you from henceforth for the whole of your life, and your son and successor after you, and successor after successor for ever and ever, as our Admiral of the said ocean, and as Viceroy and Governor of the said islands and mainland, which you, the said Don Christopher Columbus, may discover and acquire; and they shall treat with you, and with your said lieutenants whom you may place in the said offices of Admiral, Viceroy, and Governor, about everything appertaining thereto, and shall pay and cause to be paid to you the salary, dues and other things annexed and appertaining to the said offices, and shall observe and cause to be observed towards you all the honours, graces, favours, liberties, pre-eminences, prerogatives, exemptions, immunities, and all other things, and each of them, which in virtue of the said offices of Admiral, Viceroy, and Governor you shall be entitled to have and enjoy, and which ought to be observed towards you in every respect fully and completely so that nothing may be diminished therefrom; and that neither therein nor in any part thereof shall they place or consent to place hindrance or obstacle against you; for we by this our patent from now henceforth grant to you the said offices of Admiralty, Viceroy, and Governor by right of inheritance for ever and ever, and we give you actual and prospective possession thereof and of each of them, and power and authority to use and exercise it, and to collect the dues and salaries annexed and appertaining to them and to each of them, according to what is aforesaid. Concerning all that is aforesaid, if it should be necessary and you should require it of them, we command our chancellor and notaries and

## CAPITULATION

the other officers who are at the board of our seals to give, deliver, pass, and seal for you our patent of privileges with the circle of signatures, in the strongest, firmest, and most sufficient manner that you may request and may find needful, and neither one nor the other of you or them shall do contrary hereto in any manner, under penalty of our displeasure and of ten thousand maravedis to our chamber, upon every one who shall do to the contrary. And further we command the man who shall show them this our patent, to cite them to appear before us in our court, wheresoever we may be, within fifteen days from the day of citation, under the said penalty, under which we command every public scrivener who may be summoned for this purpose, to give to the person who shall show it to him a certificate thereof signed with his signature, whereby we may know in what manner our command is executed. Given in our city of Granada, on the thirtieth day of the month of April, in the year of the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ one thousand four hundred and ninety-two. I the King. I the Queen. I, John de Coloma, Secretary of the King and of the Queen, our Lords, caused this to be written by their command. Granted in form, Roderick, Doctor. Registered, Sebastian Dolano. Francis de Madrid, Chancellor.



## APPENDIX D

### THE SIGNATURE OF COLUMBUS

IT was the habit of Columbus on receiving his appointment as Admiral of the Indies and always afterwards to sign himself "el Almirante"—the Admiral; sometimes he put his name above this title and sometimes not. When he did it was his habit to write it "Xpo Ferens"—a piece of affectation supposed, with its mixture of Greek and Latin, to indicate learning, which in the academic sense of the word Columbus did not possess. Over this signature it was his habit to place the following rebus or cypher, of which the significance is not certainly known :—

.S.  
.S.A.S.  
X M Y  
Xpo FERENS.

The most likely reading of it is, *Salve me, Kristus, Maria, Yosephus*. This is arrived at by taking the top S for the invocation, and reading the other two lines as containing the first and last letters of the words indicated, the lower line containing the letters at the beginning of the words and the top line the letters with which they end. Other and less probable interpretations have from time to time been suggested, of which the following are the most interesting :—

SALVABO  
SANCTVM SEPULCHRVM  
XRISTE MARIA YESVS  
XRISTE FERENS

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# SIGNATURE OF COLUMBUS

SERVVS

SVM ALTISSIMI SALVATORIS  
KRISTE MARIA YESVS  
KRISTE FERENS

SERVVS

SVPPLEX ALTISSIMI SALVATORIS  
KRISTE MARIA YOSEPH  
KRISTE FERENS

SALVAT ME

SALVATOR ADJVVET SVCCVRAT  
XSTVS MARIA YOSEPHVS  
KRISTE FERENS

SVM

SEQVAX AMATOR SERVVS  
KRISTI MARIAE YOSEPHI  
KRISTE FERENS

SARACENOS

SVEIGAT AVERTAT SVBMOVEAT  
XSTVS MARIA YOSEPHVS  
KRISTE FERENS

SERVIDOR

SVS ALTERZAS SACRAS  
KRISTO MARIA YSABEL  
KRISTE FERENS

## APPENDIX E

### LIST OF THOSE WHO ACCOMPANIED<sup>1</sup> COLUMBUS ON HIS FIRST VOYAGE

*Santa Maria*, three-masted ship, 100 tons burden.

Admiral . . .	.	.	Christopher Columbus.
Master and Owner . . .	.	.	Juan de la Cosa of Santoña.
Pilot . . .	.	.	Sancho Ruiz.
Boatswain . . .	.	.	Maestre Diego.
Surgeon . . .	.	.	Maestre Alonso of Moguer.
Assistant Surgeon . . .	.	.	Maestre Juan.
Overseer . . .	.	.	Rodrigo Sanchez of Segovia.
Secretary . . .	.	.	<i>Rodrigo de Escobedo.</i>
Master-at-Arms . . .	.	.	<i>Diego de Arana of Cordova.</i>
Volunteers . . .	.	.	{ <i>Pedro Gutierrez.</i>
			{ <i>Bachiller Bernardo de Tapia of Ledesma.</i>
Steward . . .	.	.	Pedro Terreros.
Admiral's Servant . . .	.	.	Diego de Salcedo.
Page . . .	.	.	Pedro de Açevedo.
Interpreter . . .	.	.	Luis de Torres.
Assayer and Silversmith . . .	.	.	<i>Castillo of Seville.</i>
Seamen . . .	.	.	Rodrigo de Jerez; Garcia Ruiz of Santoña; Pedro de Villa of Santoña; Rodrigo Escobar; Francisco of Huelva; Ruy Fernandez of Huelva; Pedro Bilbao of Larrabezua; <i>Alonso Velez</i>

<sup>1</sup> The names of those who died on the voyage or were left behind at Española are printed in italics.

## LIST OF SEAMEN, ETC.

Seamen (*continued*) . . . of Seville ; Alonso Perez Osorio ; Antonio of Jaen ; Alvaro Perez Osorio ; Cristoval de Alamo of Niebla ; Diego Garcia of Jerez ; Diego de Tordoya of Cabeza de Vaca ; Diego de Capilla of Almeden ; Diego . . . of Mambles ; Diego de Mendoza ; Diego de Montalvan of Jaen ; Domingo de Bermeo ; Francisco de Godoy of Seville ; Francisco de Vergara of Seville ; Francisco . . . of Aranda ; Francisco Henao of Avila ; Francisco Jimenes of Seville ; Gabriel Baraona of Belmonte ; Gonzalo Fernandez of Segovia ; Gonzalo Fernandez of Leon ; Guillermo Ires (of Galway) ; Jorge Gonzalez of Tribueros ; Juan de Cueva ; Juan Patiño of La Serena ; Juan del Barco of Avila ; Pedro Cabacho of Caceres ; Pedro . . . of Talavera ; Sebastian of Majorca ; Tallarte de Lajes (Ingles).

### *Pinta*, caravel, 50 tons.

Captain	.	.	.	Martin Alonso Pinzon.
Master	.	.	.	Francisco Martin Pinzon.
Pilot	.	.	.	Cristoval Garcia Sarmiento.
Boatswain	.	.	.	Bartolomé Garcia.
Surgeon	.	.	.	Garcia Hernandez.
Purser	.	.	.	Juan de Jerez.
Caulker	.	.	.	Juan Perez.
Seamen	.	.	.	Rodrigo Bermudez de Triana of Alcala de la Guadaira ; Juan Rodriguez Bermejo of Molinos ; Juan de Sevilla ; Garcia Alonso ; Gomez Rascon (owner) ; Cristoval Quintero (owner) ; Diego Bermudez ; Juan Bermudez ; Francisco Garcia Gallegos of Moguer ; Francisco Garcia Vallejo ; Pedro de Arcos.



## LIST OF SEAMEN, ETC.

Salaries . . . . .	268,000	maravedis.
Wages . . . . .	252,000	„
Provisions . . . . .	319,680	„
Rent of ships . . . . .	172,800	„
Armament, trading supplies, and furnishings . . . . .	155,062	„
	<hr/>	
Total . . . . .	1,167,542	



## APPENDIX F

AFFIDAVITS OF JUNE 12, 1494

INFORMATION AND TESTIMONY, ETC.

### *Translation*

ON the caravel *Niña*, which is named *Santa Clara*, Thursday, June 12, in the year of the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ 1494, the Most Magnificent Lord, Don Christopher Columbus, High Admiral of the Ocean-Sea, Vice-Roy and perpetual Governor of the Island of San Salvador, and of all the other islands and continental land of the Indies, discovered and to be discovered, for the King and for the Queen, our Lords, and their Captain-General of the sea,—required me, Fernand Perez de Luna, one of the Public Notaries of the City of Isabella, on the part of their Highnesses : that inasmuch as he had left the said City Isabella with three caravels to come and discover the continental land of the Indies, although he had already discovered part of it on the other voyage which he had first made here the past year of the Lord 1493, and had not been able to learn the truth in regard to it : because although he travelled a long distance beside it, he had not found persons on the seacoast who were able to give a trustworthy account of it, because they were all naked people who did not possess property of their own nor trade, nor go outside their houses, nor did others come to them, according to what he learned from them : and on this account he did not declare affirmatively that it was the continental land, except that he pronounced it doubtful, and had named it *La Juana* in memory of the Prince Don Juan, our Lord : and now he left the said city of Isabella the 24th day of the month of April and came to seek the land of the said *Juana* nearest to the island of Isabella, which is shaped like a triangle

## AFFIDAVITS

extending from east to west, and the point is the eastern part, twenty-two leagues from Isabella : and he followed its coast from the east to the west in order to go to a large island which the Indians called Jamaica, which he found after having gone a long distance, and he named it *La Isla de Santiago*, and went along all its coast from east to west, and afterwards returned to the continental land, which he called *La Juana*, to the place which he had left : and he followed the coast of *La Juana* to the west many days, so that he said that according to his navigation he passed 335 leagues from the time he commenced to enter it until the present time, on which journey he perceived many times and pronounced this to be continental land, by its formation and the information he had in regard to it, and the name of the people of the Provinces, especially the Province of Mango: and now, after having discovered an infinite number of islands, of which nobody has been able to count the whole, and arrived here at a settlement, he took some Indians, who told him that the coast of this land extended to the west more than twenty days' journeys, nor did they know if it ended there : that from the place at which he had arrived, he determined to go somewhat farther onward, in order that all the persons who came in these ships, among whom there are Masters of charts of navigation and very good Pilots, the most famous that he could select in the great armada which he brought from Castile ; and in order that they might see how very great this land is, and that from here the coast extends onward to the south, as he told them, he went four days farther forward that all might be very certain that it was continental land, because in all these islands and lands there are no people by the sea, except naked people who live by fishing, and never go inland, nor know what the world is, nor anything about it at four leagues distance from their houses ; and they believe that there is nothing in the world save islands, and are a people who have no law nor doctrine, save to be born and to die, nor have they any knowledge that they may be able to know of the world : and in order that, after having finished the said voyage, no one might have cause, with malice, to speak ill of, and belittle the things which merit great praise, the said Lord Admiral required me, the said Notary, as recited above, on the part of their

## APPENDIX

Highnesses, to go personally with good witnesses to each one of the said three caravels and publicly require the Master and company, and all the other people upon them, to say whether they had any doubt that this land was the mainland of the commencement of the Indies and the end to whomever in these parts might wish to come to Spain by land : and that if they had any doubt or knowledge in regard to it, that I should beg them to make it known, because then he would remove the doubt and would show them that this is certain and that it is the continental land. And I complied with the request in this manner, and publicly required here in the caravel *Niña* of the Master and Company, who are the persons I shall name below, each one by his name and of what place he is a citizen, and in the same manner in the other two caravels aforesaid, I required of the Masters and company, and I thus declared it to them before the witnesses named below : everything in the manner that the said Lord Admiral had required it of me, I required of them ; and I placed them under a penalty of 10,000 maravedis and the cutting out of the tongue for every time that each one hereafter should say contrary to what they should now say : and if it shall be a ship's boy or a person of such condition, that he should be given one hundred lashes and have his tongue cut out : and every one having been thus required in all the three said caravels, each one by himself with great care, the Pilots, and Masters and Mariners looked at their navigator's charts, and considered and said as follows :—

Francisco Nifto, citizen of Moguer, Pilot of the caravel *Niña*, said that by the oath he had taken, he did not hear of or see an island which could have 335 leagues on one coast from west to east, and which extended still farther : and that he saw now that the land turned to the south-south-west and to the south-west and west, and that certainly he had no doubt whatever that it was continental land : rather, he affirms it, and would maintain that it is continental land and not an island, and that before many leagues, in sailing along the said coast, land would be found where there are civilised people of intelligence, who trade and who know the world, &c.

Item : Alonso Medel, citizen of Palos, Master of the caravel



## AFFIDAVITS

*Niña*, said that by the oath he had taken, that he never heard of or saw an island, &c.

Item : Johan de la Cosa, citizen of the Puerto de Santa Maria, Master of chart-making, Mariner of the said caravel *Niña*, said that by the oath he had taken, that he never heard of nor saw an island, &c.

Item : all the Mariners and ship's boys and other persons who were in the said caravel *Niña*, who understood something in regard to the sea, all said with one voice publicly, and each one for himself, that by the oath he had taken, that that was the continental land, because they never saw an island having 335 leagues on one coast, and which extended still farther than that : and that certainly they had no doubt of its being the continental land, and rather they affirmed it to be so : which said Mariners and ship's boys are the following, and named in the following manner : Johan del Barco, citizen of Palos, Mariner : Moron, citizen of Moguer : Francisco de Lepe, citizen of Moguer : Diego Beltran, citizen of Moguer : Domingo Ginoves : Estefano Veneciano : Juan de España Vizcaino : Gomez Calafar, citizen of Palos : Ramiro Perez, citizen of Lepe : Mateo de Morales, citizen of S. Juan del Puerto : Gonzalo Vizcaino, ship's boy : Francisco Ginoves, citizen of Cordova : Rodrigo Molinero, citizen of Moguer : Rodrigo Calafar, citizen of Cartaya : Alonso Niño, citizen of Moguer : Juan Vizcaino.

Item : Bartholomew Perez, citizen of Rota, Pilot of the caravel *San Juan*, said that by the oath he had taken, that he never heard of nor saw an island, &c.

Item : Alonso Perez Roldan, citizen of Málaga, Master of the said caravel *S. Juan*, said that by the oath he had taken, that he never heard of nor saw an island, &c.

Item : Alonso Rodriguez, citizen of Cartaya, Boatswain of the said caravel *S. Juan*, said that by the oath he had taken, that he never heard of nor saw an island, &c.

Item : all the Mariners and ship's boys and other persons who were in the said caravel *S. Juan*, who understood something in regard to the sea, all said with one voice publicly, and each one for himself, by the oath which they had taken, that that was continental land, because they never had seen an island of 335



## APPENDIX

leagues on one coast, and which extended still farther than that : and that certainly they had no doubt of its being continental land, rather they affirmed it to be so : which said Mariners and ship's boys are the following, and named in the following manner : Johan Rodriguez, citizen of Ciudad-Rodrigo, Mariner : Sebastian de Ayamonte, citizen of Ciudad-Rodrigo, Mariner : Diego del Monte, citizen of Moguer, Mariner : Francisco Calvo, citizen of Moguer, Mariner : Juan Dominguez, citizen of Palos, Mariner : Juan Albarracin, citizen of Puerto de Santa Maria, Mariner : Nicolas Estefano, Mallorquin, Cooper : Cristóbal Vivas, citizen of Moguer, ship's boy : Rodrigo de Santander, citizen of Moguer, ship's boy : Johan Garcés, citizen of Beas, ship's boy : Pedro de Salas, Portuguese, citizen of Lisbon, ship's boy : Hernand Lopez, citizen of Huelva, ship's boy.

Item : Cristóbal Perez Niño, citizen of Palos, Master of the caravel *Cardera*, said that by the oath he had taken, that he never heard of nor saw an island, &c.

Item : Fenerin Ginoves, Boatswain of the said caravel *Cardera*, said that by the oath he had taken, that he never heard of nor saw an island, &c.

Item : Gonzalo Alonso Galeote, citizen of Huelva, Mariner, of the said caravel *Cardera*, said that by the oath he had taken, that he never heard of nor saw an island, &c.

Item : All the Mariners and ship's boys, and other persons who were in the said caravel *Cardera*, who understand something in regard to the sea, all said with one voice publicly, and each one for himself, that by the oath they had taken that that was the mainland, because they had never seen an island of 335 leagues on one coast, and which extended still farther than that : and that certainly they had no doubt of its being the continental land, rather they affirmed it to be so : which said Mariners and ship's boys are the following, and named in the following manner : Juan de Jerez, citizen of Moguer, Mariner : Francisco Carral, citizen of Palos, Mariner : Gorjon, citizen of Palos, Mariner : Johan Greigo, citizen of Genoa, Mariner : Alonso Perez, citizen of Huelva, Mariner : Juan Vizcaino, citizen of Cartaya, Mariner : Cristóbal Lorenzo, citizen of Palos, ship's boy : Francisco de

## AFFIDAVITS

Medina, citizen of Moguer, ship's boy : Diego Leal, citizen of Moguer, ship's boy : Francisco Niño, citizen of Palos, ship's boy : Tristan, citizen of Valduerna, ship's boy.

The witnesses who were present to see all of the aforesaid sworn, and each one by himself, according to, and in the manner contained above, Pedro de Terreros, Boatswain of the said Lord Admiral : and Iñigo Lopez de Zuñiga, Carver, Servants of the said Lord Admiral : and Diego Tristan, citizen of Seville : and Francisco de Morales, citizen of Seville, &c.

In the city of Isabella, Wednesday, January 14, in the year of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ 1495, the said Lord Admiral ordered me, Diego de Peñalosa, Clerk of the Court of the King and of the Queen, our Lords, and their Notary Public in their Court and in all their realms and seigniories to investigate the registers and protocols of Fernand Perez de Luna, one of the public notaries of the said city, defunct,—whom God have in His keeping—which had remained in my possession by virtue of an order given by the Lord Admiral to me, the said Diego de Peñalosa, signed with his name, in order that I could copy from the said registers and protocols whatever writing might be demanded of me authoritatively : by which said order, I was required on the part of the said Lord Admiral to search the said registers and protocols of the said Fernand Perez de Luna, in which I would find the said requisition which is declared in this said writing, and should give it to him signed and sealed with my seal in public form, in a manner which shows it to be valid, inasmuch as he intends to make use of it at some suitable time. And I, Diego de Peñalosa, the aforesaid Notary, in virtue of the said order which I hold from the said Lord Admiral to copy clearly and authoritatively, any writings which may have passed before the aforesaid Fernand Perez da Luna, defunct notary—whom may God have in His keeping—which are in my possession, caused them to be written and clearly and conformably copied and my signature to be affixed to same. In witness of the truth.

**DIEGO DE PEÑALOSA.**

## APPENDIX G

### MAJORAT AND WILL OF COLUMBUS

FEBRUARY 22, 1498

*Translation*

**I**N THE NAME of the most Holy Trinity, which inspired me with the idea and afterwards made perfectly clear to me, that I could navigate and go to the Indies from Spain by traversing the Ocean-sea westwardly; and this I made known to the King Don Ferdinand, and to the Queen, Doña Isabella, our Lords; and it pleased them to give me provisions and an equipage of men and ships, and to make me their Admiral in the said Ocean-sea, the westward of an imaginary line which they ordered drawn from pole to pole one hundred leagues west of the Cape Verde and Azores islands; and their Viceroy and Governor General of all the mainlands and islands which I might find and discover the westward of this line; and they also granted that my eldest son should succeed me in the said offices, and in the same manner from generation to generation for ever and ever; and that he should have the tenth of everything that might be discovered and possessed and produced in the said Almirantazgo; and also the eighth part of the lands and all the other things, and the salaries which fitly belong to the offices of Admiral, Viceroy, and Governor, and all the other perquisites pertaining to the said offices, which is all more fully contained in my Privilege and Capitulation, which I have from their Highnesses.

And it pleased our All Powerful Lord that in the year One thousand four hundred and ninety-two I should discover the mainland of the Indies and many islands, among which is España which the Indian inhabitants call *Ayte* and the Monicongos c

## WILL OF COLUMBUS

*Cipango.* Afterwards I came back to Castile to their Majesties, and they directed me to return to the undertaking and to found and discover more; and thus our Lord gave me victory so that I conquered and made tributary the people of the island of Española, which is six hundred leagues around; and I discovered many cannibal islands, and seven hundred to the westward of Española among which is Jamaica, which we call Santiago, and three hundred and thirty-three leagues of mainland of the part from south to west, also one hundred and seven of the part of the north, which I had discovered on my first voyage with many islands; as will be seen more fully by my writings, memorandums, and navigators' maps. And because we hope in that high God that before long we may have a good and great revenue in the said islands and mainland, of which for the reason aforesaid the tenth and the eighth belong to me, with the salaries and perquisites aforesaid; and because we are mortal and it is well that each one should order and leave declared to his heirs and successors what he possesses and might possess:— Therefore it appeared well to me to found a Majorat from this eighth part of lands and offices and revenue, as I will state below:

In the first place: My son, Don Diego, shall succeed me, and if the Lord should dispose of him without his leaving sons, then my son, Don Ferdinand, shall succeed: and if our Lord should dispose of him without leaving a son, or my having another son, Don Bartholomew, my brother, shall succeed: and then his eldest son: and if our Lord should dispose of him without heirs, my brother, Don Diego, shall succeed, being married or able to marry; and then his eldest son shall succeed him; and in this manner from generation to generation perpetually, for ever after; commencing with my son Don Diego, and his sons succeeding from one to another perpetually, or he not having a son, Don Ferdinand, my son, to succeed, as aforesaid; and then his son, he and the aforesaid Don Bartholomew and Don Diego, my brothers, succeeding from son to son for ever after, if it should fall to them.

And if it should please our Lord that after having passed for some time in the line of one of the said successors, this Majorat should lack legitimate heirs, the nearest of kin to the person who inherited it and in whose possession it was proscribed, shall succeed

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him and inherit it; he being of legitimate birth, and his name inherited from his father and ancestors, being Columbus. And no woman may in any manner inherit this Majorat except that neither here nor in the other extremity of the world there shall be found a man of my true lineage whose name inherited from my ancestors shall be Columbus. And if this should happen (which God forbid), then in such a case the woman nearest in relationship and legitimate blood to the person who had in this manner come into possession of the said Majorat, shall have it; and this shall be with the conditions which I will give here below; which are to be understood as applying to my son, Don Diego, as well as to each one of the aforesaid persons, or to whomever may succeed, each one of them, which conditions they shall fulfil, and not fulfilling them in such case they shall be deprived of the said Majorat, and the person nearest of kin to such a person in whose possession it was proscribed because of not having fulfilled what I say here shall have it; which person failing to fulfil said conditions shall be deprived of it, and another person the nearest of my lineage shall have it, providing he keeps the said conditions, which in this manner shall endure perpetually and shall be in the form above written. This forfeiture may not be understood for trifling matters originating from lawsuits, but for important matters appertaining to the honour of God, and to my honour and to that of my lineage which means to fulfil freely what I have ordained, entirely as I say; all of which I recommend to the Courts of Justice. And I entreat the Holy Father, who now is, and those who may succeed in the Holy Church, if it should happen that this my will and testament may require his Holy edict and mandates in order to be fulfilled, that in virtue of obedience and under penalty of Papal excommunication he shall order it; and that in no manner may it ever be disfigured; and likewise I entreat the King and Queen our Sovereigns, and the prince Don Juan our Lord, their first-born and those who may succeed him, by the services I have rendered them and because it is just, that it may please them, and that they may not consent, that this my constitution of Majorat and testament, shall be disfigured, but that it may remain and be in the same manner and form which I have ordained for ever; that it may be

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the service of the All Powerful God and the root and base of my lineage, and a memory of the services I have rendered their Highnesses; for I being born in Genoa came to serve them here in Castile, and discovered the Indies and the aforesaid islands for them, to the west of the mainland. Therefore I entreat their Highnesses that without lawsuit or demand or delay they may order summarily that this, my Privilege and testament, may be valid and may be fulfilled as may be, and is, contained therein; and I also entreat the Great Lords of the realms of his Highness, and the members of his Council and all the others who have or might have charge of justice or of a body (*regimiento*) that it may please them not to consent that this my will and testament shall be without strength and virtue, but that it may be fulfilled as ordered by me; as it is very just that a person of title who has served his King and Queen and the kingdom, should be respected in all that he may order and leave by testament or compromise, and Majorat and inheritance, and that it may not be transgressed in anything, neither in any part nor in all.

In the first place Don Diego, my son, and all those who succeed me and descend from me, and likewise my brothers Don Bartholomew and Don Diego, shall bear my arms, which I shall leave after my days, without inserting anything more in them, and shall seal with the seal of the arms. Don Diego, my son, or any one else who inherits this Majorat, after having inherited and been in possession of it, shall sign with my signature which I now use, which is an X with an S over it and an M with a Roman A over it, and over that an S and after it a Greek Y with an S over it, with its lines and points as is now my custom, and as will appear by my signatures of which many will be found, and as will appear by this.

And he shall only write *The Admiral* although he may be given and may acquire other titles from the King; this is to be understood in the signature and not in his enumeration of titles, where he will be able to write all his titles as shall please him; solely in the signature he will write *The Admiral*.

The said Don Diego or any one else who inherits this Majorat shall have my office of Admiral of the Ocean-sea, which is of the



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part to the west of an imaginary line which his Highness ordered drawn from pole to pole 100 leagues beyond the Azores and Cape Verde Islands, beyond which they ordered and made me the Admiral of the Sea, with all the pre-eminencies which the Admiral Don Henrique has in the Almirantazgo of Castile; and they made me their Viceroy and perpetual Governor for ever after, in all the islands and main land discovered and to be discovered, for myself and my heirs, as appears more fully from my privileges which I have, and by my capitulation as above mentioned.

Item. That the said Don Diego, or any one else who inherits the said Majorat, shall distribute the revenue that it shall please our Lord to give him, in this manner, under the said penalty.

In the first place: He will give of all that this Majorat may yield now and for ever, and of whatever shall be had and obtained from it and by it, the fourth part each year to Don Bartholomew Columbus, my brother, Adelantado of the Indies, and shall do this until he has for his revenues a million maravedis for his maintenance, and for the service which he has rendered and continues to render in the service of this Majorat; which said million he will receive as aforesaid each year, if the said fourth part amounts to so much, and he has nothing else; but having some or all of that amount in revenue, henceforth he shall not have the said million or a part of it; except that from now he shall have in the said fourth part as much as the said amount of a million, if it amounts to that; and as much as he has of revenue besides this fourth part, whatever sum of maravedis of known revenue from property which he might be able to rent, or perpetual offices, the said quantity of revenue which he may have in this manner or he will be able to have from the said his property or perpetual offices, shall be abated; and from the said million whatever marriage dower he receives with the woman he marries shall be reserved; so that all that he has with the said woman, it will not be understood that on account of it he will have to discount anything from the said million save what he acquires or possesses beyond the said marriage portion of his wife; and after it shall please God that he or his heirs, or whoever descends from him, may have a million of revenue from property and offices, if he should wish to rent them as aforesaid, he nor his heirs shall have



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nothing more from the fourth part of the said Majorat, and the said Don Diego, or whoever inherits, shall have it.

Don Ferdinand, my son, shall have of the said revenue of the said Majorat or of another fourth part of it, a million each year, if the said fourth part amounts to so much, until he has two millions of revenue in the same form and manner which is said of Don Bartholomew, my brother, he and his heirs, in the same manner as Don Bartholomew, my brother, and his heirs, have the said million or the part which is deficient from it.

Item. The said Don Diego and Don Bartholomew shall order that Don Diego, my brother, shall have from the revenue of the said Majorat as much as will suffice to maintain him honestly, as my brother which he is, to whom I leave no stipulated sum, because he wishes to be of the church, and they will give him what is right ; and this shall be in one sum, before anything is given to Don Ferdinand, my son, or to Don Bartholomew, my brother, or to their heirs, and also according to the income derived from the said Majorat ; and if there should be disagreement in this, then in said case it may be referred to two of our kinsmen, or to other honourable persons, that they may choose one and he may choose the other ; and if they should not be able to agree, the two said arbitrators may select another person of honour, who shall not be suspected by any of the parties.

Item. That all the revenue which I order given to Don Bartholomew and to Don Ferdinand, and to Don Diego, my brother, they may have and may be given to them as aforesaid, as long as they and their heirs are loyal and faithful to Don Diego, my son, or whoever inherits ; and if it should be found that they were in opposition to him in anything pertaining to his honour and in opposition to the increase of my lineage and of the said Majorat, in word or in deed, by which there should appear and should be offence and abasement of my lineage and loss to the same estate, or any one of them, they shall not have anything from that time forward ; so that they may always be faithful to Don Diego or whoever inherits.

Item. As in the beginning when I created this Majorat, I intended to distribute, or that Don Diego, my son, or any other



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person who inherited it, should distribute to needy persons, the tenth part of the revenue as a tithe and in commemoration of the Eternal All Powerful God; for this reason I now say that, to further and carry out my intention, and in order that His High Majesty may aid me and those who may inherit this, here or in the other world, the said tithe shall yet be paid in this manner :

In the first place. Of the fourth part of the revenue from this Majorat, which I ordained and directed should be given to Don Bartholomew, until he should have a million of revenue, it shall be understood that the said tenth of all the rent of the said Majorat is included in this million; and that as the revenue of the said Don Bartholomew, my brother, increases, as something or all may have to be discounted from the revenue of the fourth part of the Majorat, that all the aforesaid rent shall be seen and counted in order to know how much the tenth of it amounts to; and the part which does not fall to, or exceeds, what the said Don Bartholomew requires for the million,—that the persons of my lineage who shall most need it shall have it in discount from the said tenth, looking out to give it to a person who has not Fifty thousand maravedis of income; and if the one who has least should come to possess an income of Fifty thousand maravedis, he shall have the part which two persons who shall be chosen for this purpose shall determine, together with Don Diego or with whoever inherits; so that it is to be understood that the million which I order given to Don Bartholomew comprehends the said tenth aforesaid of the said Majorat; and that all this revenue from the Majorat I wish and have ordered distributed to my nearest and most needy kinsmen; and after the said Don Bartholomew has his million and there is nothing owing him from the said fourth part, then the said Don Diego, my son, or the person who may have the said Majorat, with the other two persons whom I shall here designate, shall see and may see, that the tenth part of all this rent is given to, and possessed by, the most needy persons of my lineage who shall be here or in any other part of the world, where they shall be diligently sought; and it may be of the said fourth part from which the said Don Bartholomew is to have the million; which I calculate and give in discount from the said tenth, by reason of

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computation, that if the aforesaid tenth amounts to more, this excess also shall come from the fourth part and the most needy shall have it, as I have already said ; and if it is not enough, that the said Don Bartholomew shall have it until his own increases, leaving the said million in part or in whole.

Item. That the said Don Diego, my son, or the person who inherits, shall take two persons of my lineage, the nearest of kin, and persons of spirit and authority, who will diligently examine the said revenue and the account thereof, and cause the said tenth to be paid from the said fourth part, from which the said million is given to Don Bartholomew,—to the most needy of my lineage who shall be here or anywhere else, and they shall inquire for them with much diligence and upon charge of their souls : and as it might be that the said Don Diego or the person who inherits might not wish for some reason which may relate to their own good and honour, and the sustainment of the said Majorat, that the entire revenue from it should be known, I direct him that he shall yet make known the said revenue upon charge of his soul, and I direct the aforesaid two persons upon charge of their consciences and souls, not to denounce or publish it, save when it shall be the will of the said Don Diego, or the person who inherits, only making sure that the said tenth is paid in the manner aforesaid.

Item. That there may be no differences in the choice of these two nearest kinsmen who shall act with Don Diego, or with the person who inherits, I say that therefore I choose Don Bartholomew, my brother, for one, and Don Ferdinand, my son, for the other, and as soon as they enter into the matter they shall be obliged to name two other persons who shall be the nearest of my lineage and of great confidence : and these shall choose two others at the same time that they commence to employ themselves in this action : and thus it will be continued from one to another with much diligence, the same in this as in the other matter of government, for the benefit and honour and service of God, and of the said Majorat, for ever.

Item. I direct the said Don Diego, my son, or the person who inherits the said Majorat, to keep and always maintain in the city of Genoa, a person of our lineage who has a house and wife there,



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and I direct that he shall have an income so that he may be able to live honestly, as a person so near to our lineage: and that he may be the root and base of it in the said city, as a citizen thereof, so that he may have aid and protection from the said city in matters of his own necessity, since from it I came, and in it I was born.

Item. That the said Don Diego, or whoever inherits the said Majorat, shall send in the form of exchange or in whatever manner he is able, all the moneys which he sayes from the revenues of the said Majorat, and shall cause to be purchased from them in his name and that of his heir, some purchases called *logros*, which the office of St. George has, and which now yield 6 per cent. and are very sure moneys, and this shall be for the purpose which I shall state here.

Item. Because it becomes every man of rank and income to serve God, and for the benefit of his honour that it may be perceived that it is by himself and by means of his fortune, and as any money whatever yonder in St. George is very secure and Genoa is a noble and powerful city by the sea; and because at the time I started to go and discover the Indies it was with the intention of supplicating the King and Queen, our Lords, that the revenue which their Highnesses might have from the Indies, they should determine to spend in the conquest of Jerusalem; and in this manner I supplicated it, and if they do it, it will be a good design; and if not, that it may yet be the said Don Diego, or the person who inherits in this purpose to collect the said money in order to go with the King, our Lord, if it should be to Jerusalem to reconquer it; or to go alone with the greatest force that he has, that it will please our Lord if he has and shall have this intention, to give him such aid that he will be able to do it, and may do it; and if he shall not have money to conquer all, that he will give him at least enough for a part of it; therefore let him collect and make his fund from his treasure in the places of St. George in Genoa, and let it there multiply until he has a sufficient quantity so that it may appear to him and he may know, that he will be able to do some good work in this matter of Jerusalem; because I believe that after the King and Queen, our Lords, and their successors, shall see that he is determined in this, their Highnesses

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will be moved to do it themselves, and will give him aid and comfort, as to a servant and vassal, who will do it in their name.

Item. I direct Don Diego, and all those who descend from me, especially to the person who inherits this Majorat, which consists as I have said of the tenth of all that shall be found and possessed in the Indies, and the eighth part of the other extreme of lands and revenue, all which with the perquisites from my offices of Admiral and Viceroy and Governor, is more than 25 per cent. : that all the revenue from this and their persons and the power they have, shall be obliged and employed in sustaining and serving their Highnesses or their heirs, well and faithfully, as far as to lose and spend their lives and fortunes for their Highnesses ; because their Highnesses, after God our Lord, gave me the beginning to have and to be able to acquire and obtain this Majorat ; although I came to them in their realms, to persuade them to this undertaking, and there was a long time that they did not give me support to put it in operation ; although this is not to be marvelled at, because this undertaking was unknown to all the world and there was no one who would believe it, by which I am under very great obligation to them, and because since then they have always granted me many favours and much increase.

Item. I direct the said Don Diego, or whoever possesses the said Majorat, that if through our sins any schism should arise in the Church of God, or if through tyranny any person of whatever rank or condition he may be should wish to dispossess it of its honour and property, under the aforesaid penalty he shall place his person at the feet of the Holy Father, except he should be a heretic (which God forbid), to be determined for and used for the work of serving him, with all his power and revenue and estate, and in delivering the Church from the said schism and preventing the Church from being dispossessed of its honour and property.

Item. I direct the said Don Diego, or whoever possesses the said Majorat, that he shall always strive and labour for the honour and good and increase of the city of Genoa, and shall use all his strength and property in defending and augmenting the benefit and honour of the republic, not going in opposition to the service of

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the Church of God, and the high estate of the King and of the Queen, our Lords, and of their successors.

Item. That the said Don Diego, or the person who inherits, or shall be in possession of the said Majorat, from the fourth part of which, as I have said above, shall be distributed the tenth of all the rent, when Don Bartholomew and his heirs shall have saved the two millions or part of it, and when some of the tenth is to be distributed to our kinsmen,—that he and the said two persons with him, who shall be our kinsmen, must distribute and spend this tenth in the marriage of girls of our lineage who may require it, and in doing as much good as they are able.

Item. That at the time which is found suitable, he shall order a church built in the most proper place in the island of Española, which shall be entitled Santa Maria de la Concepcion, and it shall have a hospital upon the best possible plan, the same as those in Castile and Italy; and he shall order a chapel to be erected in which masses for my soul and the souls of our ancestors and successors shall be said with much devotion; as it pleases our Lord to give us a sufficient revenue so that the aforesaid may be fulfilled.

Item. I direct the said Don Diego, my son, or whoever inherits the said Majorat, to labour to maintain and sustain in the island of Española four good professors of the Holy Theology, with intention and idea of their labouring, and ordering that they shall labour, to convert to our Holy Faith all those people of the Indies, and when it pleases our Lord that the revenue of the said Majorat shall increase, that the professors and devout persons shall be increased in the same manner, and shall labour to make these people Christians: and for this, he shall have no regret in spending all that is necessary; and in commemoration of what I say, and of all the aforesaid, he shall have erected in the most public place in the said church of the Conception, a monument in order continually to remind the said Don Diego of what I say, and all the other persons who shall see it, on which monument shall be an inscription which shall say this.

Item. I direct Don Diego, my son, or whoever inherits the said Majorat, that each time and as many times as he is obliged to confess he shall first show this compromise, or the copy of it, to his

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confessor, and shall entreat him to read everything, that he may have reason to examine into the fulfilment of it ; and it may be the cause of much good and the repose of his soul.

Thursday, February 22, 1498.

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el Almirante.

## CODICIL EXECUTED AT VALLADOLID

MAY 19, 1506

IN the noble city of Valladolid, on the 19th day of the month of May in the year of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ 1506,—before me, Pedro de Hinojedo, Clerk of the Court of their Highnesses and Notary Public of Province in their Court and Chancery, and their Clerk and Notary Public in all their Kingdoms and Seigniories ; and in the presence of the witnesses below written : The Señor Don Christopher Columbus, Admiral and Viceroy and Governor-General of the islands and mainland of the Indies, discovered and to be discovered, which he said that he was : being infirm in body, said, that whereas he had made his testament before a Notary Public, that now he rectified, and rectifies, the said testament, and approved it and did approve it as good, and if it was necessary he executed it and did execute it anew : and now in addition to the said his testament, he had written a document with his hand and letter, which he showed and presented before me, the said Notary Public, which he said was written with his hand and letter and signed with his name : that he executed and did execute all that was contained in the said document, before me, the said Notary Public, according to, and in the manner and form which was contained in the said document, and all the bequests contained therein, that they may be fulfilled and be valid as his last and final will. And to fulfil the said his testament, which he had, and has made and executed, and all contained therein, every one thing and part of it, he named and did name for the Agents and Executors of his will, Señor Don Diego Columbus, his son, and

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Don Bartholomew Columbus, his brother, and Juan de Porras, Treasurer of Vizcaya, that all three of them may fulfil his testament and all contained therein, and in the said document, and all the legacies and bequests and obsequies in it contained. For which purpose he said that he gave and did give to all, sufficient authority, and that he executed and did execute before me, the said Notary Public, everything contained in the said writing, and to those present he said that he requested and did request that they would be witnesses. The witnesses who were present, named, and requested for everything aforesaid,—the Bachelor Andres Mirueña and Gaspar de la Misericordia, citizens of this said city of Valladolid, and Bartolomé de Fresco and Alvaro Perez, and Juan Despinosa and Andrea and Fernando de Vargas, and Francisco Manuel and Fernan Martinez, servants of the said Señor Admiral. The contents of which said document, which was written with the letter and hand of the said Admiral, and signed with his name, *de verbo ad verbum*, are as follows :

When I went from Spain in the year 1502, I made an order and Majorat of my property and of what then appeared to me to fulfil my will and the service of Eternal God, and my honour, and the honour of my successors : which document I left in the monastery of Las Cuevas in Seville, with Father Don Gaspar, with my other writings and privileges, and the letters which I have received from the King and Queen, our Lords. Which order I approve and confirm by this, which I write for the greater fulfilment and declaration of my intention. Which I order fulfilled in the manner here declared and contained, that what shall be discharged by this may not make the other void, because it may not be twice [written].

And I constituted my dear son, Don Diego, for my heir of all my property and the offices which I have by right and inheritance, from what I created in the Majorat, and he not having a male heir, my son Don Ferdinand shall inherit in the same manner, and he not having a male heir, that Don Bartholomew, my brother, shall inherit in the same manner, and in the same manner if he shall not have a male heir, that my other brother shall inherit ; which is to be understood thus, the nearest kinsman of my lineage



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from one to the other for ever. And no woman shall inherit, excepting no man can be found, and if this should happen, it shall be the woman who is nearest of my lineage.

And I direct the said Don Diego, my son, not to think or presume to change the said Majorat, except to increase and add to it ; that is to say, that the income which he receives, with his person and estate, shall serve the King and Queen, our Lords, and the increase of the Christian religion.

The King and Queen, our Lords, when I served them in the Indies : I say served, because it appears that I, by the will of God, our Lord, gave the Indies to them, as something which was mine : I can say it, because I importuned their Highnesses for them, the way thereto being hidden and unknown to all who spoke of them, and in order to go and discover them, besides contributing the information and my person, their Highnesses did not spend or wish to spend for it, more than a million maravedis, and it was necessary for me to spend the rest : thus it pleased their Highnesses that I should have for my part of the said Indies, Islands and mainland, which are situated west of a line which they ordered drawn from pole to pole One Hundred leagues upon the Azores and Cape Verde Islands—that I should have for my part the third and the eighth of all, and also the tenth of what is in them, as will be shown more fully by the said my privileges and letters of grace.

Because until the present time no revenue has been received from the said Indies, and as, of it, I can divide what I shall designate below, and it is hoped in the mercy of our Lord that a very great revenue may be received, my intention would be and is, that Don Ferdinand, my son, shall have a million and a half from it each year, and Don Bartholomew, my brother, One Hundred and Fifty thousand maravedis, and Don Diego, my brother, One Hundred thousand maravedis, because he is in the Church. More than this I cannot say definitely, because until the present time, I have not received, neither is there a known revenue, as aforesaid.

I say to explain more fully the aforesaid, that my will is that the said Don Diego, my son, may have the said Majorat, with all my property and offices, in the manner which has been expressed and as I have them. And I say that from the whole of the revenue

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which he shall have by reason of the said inheritance, he shall make ten parts each year, and one of these parts he shall divide among those of our kin who appear to be the most needy, and among poor people and in other pious works. And afterwards, he shall take two of these nine parts and divide them into thirty-five parts, and of the thirty-five parts Don Ferdinand, my son, shall have twenty-seven, and Don Bartholomew five, and Don Diego, my brother, three. And because as aforesaid, my desire would be that Don Ferdinand my son should have a million and a half, and Don Bartholomew One Hundred and Fifty thousand maravedis, and Don Diego One Hundred thousand; and I do not know how this will come about, because until the present time the said revenue of the said Majorat is not known nor can it be computed; I say that this order above expressed shall be followed, until it shall please our Lord that the said two parts of the said nine shall be enough and shall increase to such an amount as to provide the said million and a half for Don Ferdinand, the One Hundred and Fifty thousand for Don Bartholomew, and the One Hundred thousand for Don Diego.

And when it shall please God that this shall be, or if the said two parts to be understood from the nine aforesaid, shall amount to the sum of One million Seven Hundred and Fifty Thousand maravedis, then Don Diego, or whoever inherits, shall have all the surplus. And I say to, and request the said Don Diego, my son, or whoever inherits, that if the revenue from this said Majorat increases so much, that he will please me by giving the part here designated to Don Ferdinand and my brothers.

I say that I create a Majorat for Don Ferdinand of this part which I direct to be given to him, and that his oldest son shall succeed therein, and thus from one to another perpetually, without having power to sell, or exchange, or give or transfer it in any manner, and it shall be in the manner and form expressed in the other Majorat, which I have created for Don Diego, my son.

I say to Don Diego, my son, and direct, that when he receives sufficient revenue from the said Majorat and inheritance, that he shall maintain three Chaplains in a chapel which he shall have builded, who shall say three masses each day, one to the honour

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of the Holy Trinity, another to the Conception of our Lady, and the other for the souls of all the faithful dead, and for my soul and the souls of my father and mother and wife. And if his fortune is sufficient he may make the said chapel honourable, and increase the orisons and prayers for the Honour of the Holy Trinity, and if this can be in the island of Española, which God gave me miraculously, I would be glad that it might be yonder, where I invoked it, which is in the Vega that is called La Concepcion.

And I say to, and direct Don Diego, my son, or whomsoever inherits, to pay all the debts which I leave here in a memorandum in the manner expressed therein, and furthermore the other debts which it shall justly appear that I owe. And I direct him to make provision for Beatriz Enriquez, mother of Don Fernando, my son, so that she may be able to live honestly, being a person to whom I am under very great obligation. And this shall be done for the satisfaction of my conscience, because this matter weighs heavily upon my soul. The reason for which, it is not fitting to write here.

Done the 25th of August 1505.

[Signed :] CHRISTO FERENS.

The witnesses who were present and saw the Señor Admiral make and execute all the aforesaid, as written above: the said Bachelor de Mirueña, Gaspar de la Misericordia, citizens of the said city of Valladolid, and Bartholomé de Fresco and Alvaro Perez, and Juan Despinosa and Andrea and Fernando de Vargas and Francisco Manuel and Fernan Martinez, servants of the said Señor Admiral. And I, the said Pedro de Hinojedo, the aforesaid clerk and Notary Public, together with the said witnesses, witnessed the aforesaid. And I, therefore, affix this, my signature, here, to that effect. In testimony of the truth. PEDRO DE HINOJEDO, Clerk.

In continuation of the codicil in the hand of the Admiral, there was a memorandum or annotation, also in his hand, to the following effect:

Citation of certain persons, to whom I wish given from my

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property what is contained in this memorandum, without anything being required from them. Have it given in such manner that they may not know who orders it to be given to them.

In the first place, to the heirs of Gerónimo del Puerto, father of Benito del Puerto, Chancellor in Genoa, twenty ducats, or its value.

To Antonio Vazo, Genoese shopkeeper, who was in the habit of living in Lisbon, Two thousand Five Hundred reals of Portugal, which are a little more than seven ducats, there being three hundred and seventy-five reals to the ducat.

To a Jew, who dwelt at the gate of the Jewry in Lisbon, or whom a Priest shall designate, the value of half a silver mark.

To the heirs of Luis Centurion Escoto, Genoese shopkeeper, thirty thousand reals of Portugal, of those which are worth 385 reals to the ducat, which equals seventy-five ducats, a little more or less.

To these same heirs and to the heirs of Paulo de Negro, Genoese, one hundred ducats or their value; half to go to the heirs of one, and half to the heirs of the other.

To Baptista Espíndola, or to his heirs, if he is dead, twenty ducats. This Baptista Espíndola is the son-in-law of the said Luis Centurion and was the son of Nicolao Espíndola of Locoli de Ronco, and apparently was living in Lisbon in the year 1482.

Which said memorandum and charge aforesaid, I, the Clerk, testify was written in the said Admiral's own handwriting, in testimony to which, I subscribed my name thereto. PEDRO DE AZCOYTIA.

APPENDIX H  
COLUMBUS IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN  
CRITICISM

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE HON. WHITELAW REID  
BY HENRY VIGNAUD

The Hon. WHITELAW REID,  
No. 451 Madison Avenue, New York.

DEAR MR. REID,—I have received your letter of the 5th inst., and am delighted that my study on the true birth-date of Columbus has interested you. You observe very justly that, though I have succeeded in showing Columbus hid the date of his birth, I have not clearly demonstrated what was the motive for this deliberate reticence.

Others have also made the same observation, and have expressed surprise that great attention has been given to a question which at the first blush seems only a matter of very secondary importance.

Were it, indeed, only a question of establishing the exact year in which Columbus was born, I confess it would be a subject about which there was no great cause for us to trouble our heads—the game would not be worth the candle.

But behind it there lies another question which is of the greatest importance. I refer to the good faith, the truthfulness of Columbus. We are interested in the veracity of Columbus to the very highest degree, for the story of the discovery of America as we find it told in all the books, as it is accepted by most folk, is to a very large extent based on the evidence supplied by Columbus himself. It is from the letters and notes that he has left; it is from the two books written, one by his son and the other by the close friend of the family, Las Casas—books entirely composed from his papers



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—that modern writers on this subject have primarily drawn their information, and often all their information.

From these sources chiefly have been compiled all the histories we possess of the discovery of America, from that of Herrera, the first in date, to that of the wealthy amateur of Brooklyn who has just given us two sumptuous volumes on Columbus. From these sources we learn that Columbus came of a noble stock; that the arms of his ancestors are engraved on their tombs at Piacenza; that there had been admirals of his name and blood; that his kinsfolk had always been connected with the sea; that he himself had taken to the sea from his earliest years; that he had commanded a royal galley for King René and had fought beneath the flag of the famous Admirals Colombo, his relatives; that he had sailed in every sea; that during forty years of seafaring he had studied the secrets of nature, and that his cosmographical speculations had taught him that the maritime space separating the extremities of the known world was not very great, and that by crossing it the Indies could be reached by a shorter route than by the other way. This was, indeed, the project, so we are informed by himself, that he proposed to the Catholic Kings, and which they accepted.

So long as there existed no reason to suspect the authenticity of these facts thus presented, one might and even had to accept the documents which bore witness to them; and thus, in time, the history of Columbus, as it came to us from Columbian sources, gathered such weight and credit that the only Columbus who was known was the one he himself and his intimates had depicted, whose career they had traced, and whose work they had explained.

But criticism, which is no respecter of persons or things, turned at last her searching glance on the Columbian legend and closely scrutinised the sources whence it came. In addition to the documents of Columbian origin hitherto relied on, she discovered others of an independent character which were at singular variance with the former. There were deeds of notaries long forgotten and buried beneath the dust of centuries in private archives; there were writings of contemporary Genoese, who had never been under

## MODERN CRITICISM

the influence of Columbus or his family; finally, there were official documents which cannot mislead, but which record facts and dates with cold, business-like impartiality.

By studying these new sources of information it was found, little by little, that many of the facts set forth by Columbian traditions were controverted, and that it was necessary to submit the tradition itself to a close and severe inspection. At first this was done with great reserve—one might almost say with timidity. Such glory surrounded the figure of Columbus, such faith existed in his uprightness, that in the beginning it never occurred to the critics that among his own assertions there might be some which were lacking in candour. They contented themselves with blaming his earliest biographers, and even when confronted with assertions of his own which were simply unacceptable, they invented some explanation or found some plausible excuse.

The boldest among them, even Mr. HARRISSE, who has corrected so many errors which had become deeply imbedded in Columbian history, did not venture to go further; and for authors, who are most exacting in all matters of historical research, Columbus still remains the great navigator, whose meditations suggested to him a stroke of genius that led to a discovery differing from all others. In other words, the history of Columbus—which is that of the discovery of America—in all its fundamental features, and as it is known to the world at large, remains even to this day based above all on the evidence of the person who was most interested therein.

Unfortunately, it is a fact, only too well established now, that Columbus, when he thought it was to his interest, sinned against truth by commission just as freely as by omission. He talked as openly of his sailor ancestors, of his relatives the admirals, of his many years of navigation, as he was careful to keep secret the place and date of his birth. This reticence, in itself remarkable in so communicative a man, who was fond both of talking and writing much, did not seem important so long as the world was ignorant of the true condition of the Columbus family; but, now that we are acquainted therewith, we are compelled to see things

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in a different light, and to conclude that the silence of Columbus was deliberate, for had he stated where he was born it would easily have become known that (contrary to his own declarations) his family were only poor weavers.

The same argument applies to his age. Had he allowed it to be known it must have raised questions as to how he could have made all the campaigns of which he boasted before he first went to Spain in 1485. Thus it is clear that the question of the true date of the birth of Columbus has great importance, and that it is by no means a matter of indifference if criticism can indisputably fix it to have been in 1451, and not 1436 or even 1446 as is generally supposed.

The corrections which criticism has successively made to many assertions, either coming directly from Columbus or from persons inspired by him, deal, it is true, with points of only secondary importance; and it has been said these points have no bearing upon the facts which determined the discovery of the New World. But Columbus's want of sincerity in matters only indirectly affecting history lessens considerably the value of his testimony in the case of events in which he took part and about which we require to be accurately informed.

If it be well established that he did not speak the truth under certain circumstances, how can we be certain he did so under others? If from vanity or any other motive he concealed or distorted the truth, why should he not also have done so when urged by considerations of far greater importance to himself?

The discovery that Columbus was not a truthful man affects not only his moral worth, by showing he was capable of stooping to a lie, but it also takes away all trust in his word; it discredits every statement that he has made; it forces us to ask whether similar inaccuracies do not vitiate his evidence in a number of other circumstances, known to us only through him, in which it may have been to his advantage to hide the truth?

Having stated this, I would now ask if criticism has not the right to subject to a severe and rigorous scrutiny that assertion



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which of all those made by Columbus has for us the greatest importance—that assertion on which rests our conception of the origin and character of the undertaking which resulted in the discovery of the New World? I ask if it be not the bounden duty of the critic to see whether the information obtainable from other than Columbian sources, or which may be deduced from the facts themselves, confirms the formal declarations of Columbus cited above, that his scheme was based on theoretical reasonings, that his object was to reach the Indies by a new route, that this was what he proposed to the Catholic Kings, and that this was what they commissioned him to do?

This critical examination is not impossible. Although most of the documents dealing with this great event come to us through Columbian channels, fortunately some exist of an independent nature, and they suffice to show that here again it is unsafe to trust in the testimony of Columbus.

Just as we were enlightened by the discovery of private deeds and documents as to the true condition of the Columbus family at Genoa, which he has shown to us under very false aspect, so are we made acquainted with the real character of his enterprise by the existence of the official minutes of the contracts negotiated between him and the Catholic Kings. Turn over the pages of those precious documents, drawn up with the greatest care, under the eyes and with the assistance of Columbus himself, and you will find nothing which should be found therein if what he said were true. There is not a word about finding a new route from the West to the East, about going to the Indies; there is not even mention of the Indies, that word never occurring once throughout these documents; the only reference is to lands and new islands to be discovered in the ocean, of which lands and islands the discoverer is to have the government.

Nor are these the only documents bearing on the subject wherein we find no reference to what was, according to Columbus and his first biographers, the object of the expedition. In order to assure the execution of the contract to which they had set their hand and seal, the Catholic Kings issued Ordinances, gave instructions, prescribed measures, the texts of all which have come

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down to us. These texts, like the Capitulations, are silent about that route to the Indies, which he afterward said it was the object of the undertaking to discover and traverse for the first time. In order to fit out his ships for the voyage Columbus had negotiated with numerous persons at Palos and its neighbourhood, to whom he must necessarily have explained what it was he proposed doing. Yet when, later on, they were summoned to depose respecting the expedition, not one of all these persons who had been informed of these preparations, or who had actually taken part in them, said a word about the Indies, or about its having any other purport than the discovery of new lands.

One may pursue this critical examination as far as one chooses, may follow every step taken by Columbus to further his scheme, may consult all the documents, all the writings of the period which are neither directly from his hand nor from persons inspired by him, and nowhere will there be found any confirmation of his assertions. But if this examination shows nothing of the kind, on the other hand it does unveil a very curious fact, namely, that this reference to the Indies, which ought to have appeared in all the documents drawn up between Columbus and the Catholic Kings bearing upon the object of his undertaking, and which can be found in none of them, crops up for the first time after the return of Columbus in 1493, and is never omitted in any of the official documents drafted after the great discovery.

This is surely a collection of significant facts, and the critic who notes them is obliged to confess that if they do not explicitly contradict the testimony of Columbus they certainly do not confirm it, and that, so far as the end and nature of the great event of 1492 is concerned, we remain face to face with the statements of Columbus alone, unsupported by a shred of confirmatory evidence.

It is exactly the same with the allegation that the Florentine astronomer, Toscanelli, maintained a scientific correspondence, first with King Alfonso and afterward with Columbus, respecting the new route to the Indies. Be this correspondence apocryphal, or have sought to demonstrate, or be it genuine, as is generally supposed, our belief in its existence must rest solely on statements

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coming from Columbian sources and traceable to Columbus himself, viz. his son Ferdinand and Bishop Las Casas, both of whom admit that they quote either from the man whose life they wrote or from his papers. Columbus alone knew that Toscanelli furnished the King of Portugal with information on the route to the Indies; Columbus alone knew of this correspondence; Columbus alone was able to obtain a copy of it; no other copy exists but his, and the original has never been heard of, let alone produced.

There is neither hypothesis nor conjecture in what I have here set down. They are facts, facts which may indeed be differently interpreted, but which from the point of view of facts cannot be disputed. Here I only wish to signal their existence. I shall not recall the reasons which to my mind simply compel the belief that the letters attributed to Toscanelli are forgeries, nor seek to prove that Columbus's claim as to the purport and nature of his enterprise is unfounded. All I seek to show is that the generally received opinion that the scheme of Columbus was based on considerations of a theoretical character has no other foundations than Columbus's own statement; that our belief that the discovery of America was due to an attempt to carry out a scheme for reaching the Indies by way of the West rests, in the last resort, solely on the unsupported testimony of the man whose interest lay in maintaining the assertion—on the word of Christopher Columbus, who was not a truthful man. For the moment, and in this place, I intend to go no further.

In bringing this long letter to an end, permit me to say a few words as to the place that should be assigned to Columbus in history. At the time of the scandal caused by the publication of my book on the pretended correspondence of Columbus with Toscanelli, a woman of talent, who was also a beautiful woman—and apparently on that account entitled to say anything—wrote me in great indignation that America, having despoiled Spain of her colonies, now sought to tarnish the glory of her own discoverer.

Neither America nor I have had so black a design.

Whatever may have been the moral weaknesses of Columbus, he is the discoverer of America, and that alone suffices to assure him



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his rank among those to whom grateful humanity raises statues. Whether he made the discovery while in search of new lands, as I contend, or while seeking to reach the Indies, as he afterwards pretended, he accomplished what no one was able to do before him and what no one can do after him. His work is unique; nothing can destroy or diminish it. To have been able to perform it he needed to be a man of mettle, and such, indeed, he was. If that high character which is rarer than talent was not his, he had a will which, like Faith, might move mountains, perseverance which nothing could tire, energy which nothing could overcome. Whatever may have been said or written to the contrary, he lacked the range and depth of vision characteristic of superior minds, that foresight which stamps true genius, for Columbus blundered in all his calculations, was wrong in all his forecasts, and was able neither to explain nor even to understand his own great work.

He was boastful and lying, greedy, violent and brutal. He was a stranger to those feelings of pity and gratitude which ennoble the heart of man. Yet his mind could embrace vast designs, his soul was capable of noble flights, and in the hour of evil fortune he displayed a fortitude and dignity which have won him the sympathy and respect of posterity. Thus, like the legendary Colossus with his feet of clay, Columbus had his faults; but he accomplished mighty deeds, and we justly enrol his name among the great men of all time. In what really constitutes his glory he has nothing to fear from the corrections of history.

Most sincerely yours,

HENRY VIGNAUD.

AMBASSADE DES ETATS-UNIS,  
18 AVENUE KLEBER, PARIS.  
*March 1904.*

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